

1

VOLUME

SHONENJUMP MANGA

Tegami Bachi

LETTER * BEE


STORY AND ART BY

HIROYUKI ASADA

There is a land of perpetual night...



...a land called Amberground.



...a rare breed of government agent travels this dark, dangerous territory on official business.

Where the light of the man-made sun that shines over the capital cannot reach...



...with their HEARTS.

People entrust

these agents

...

And they have sworn to deliver...



...
letters.

...to
deliver
...

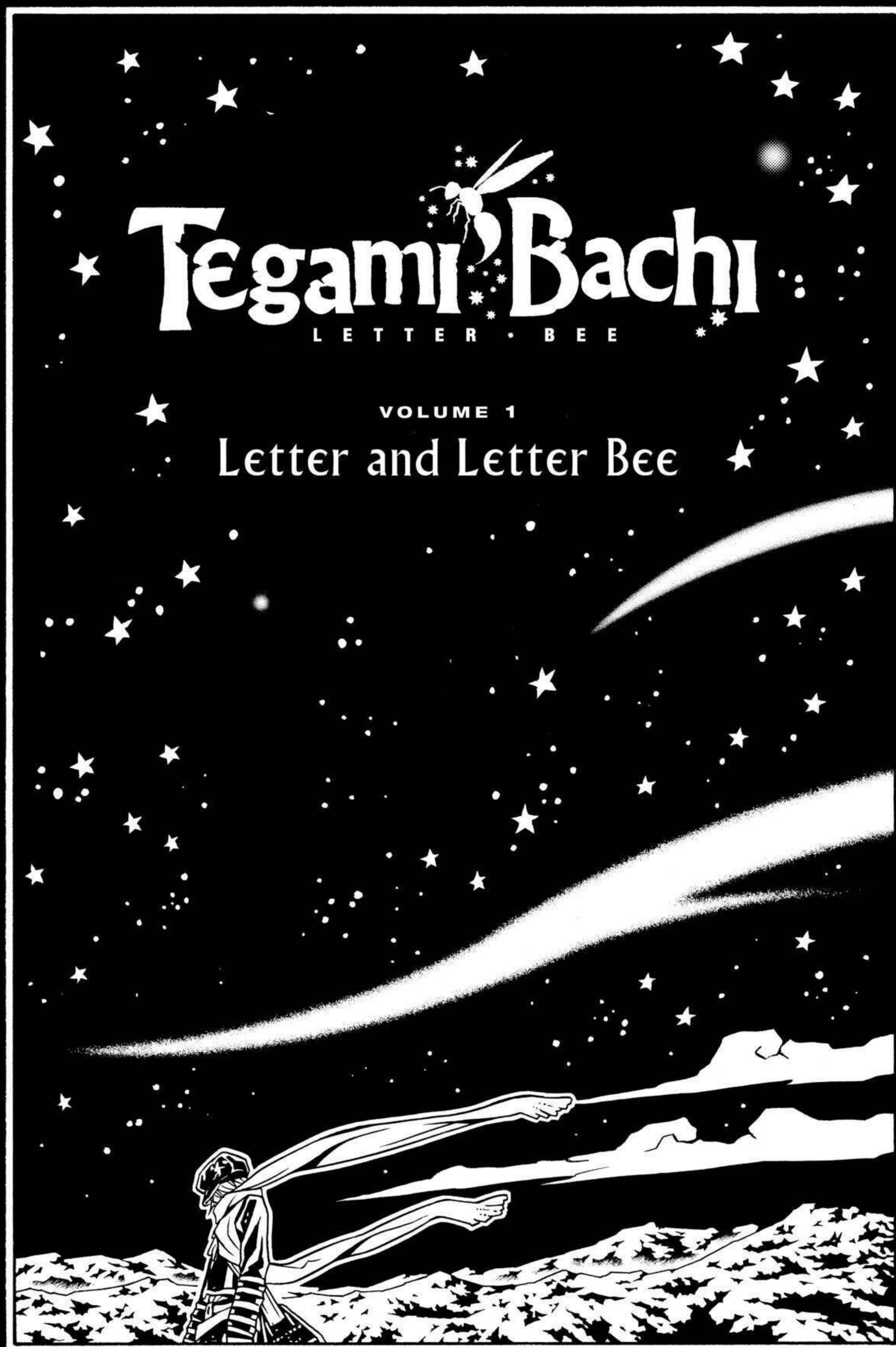


*In
all
things...*

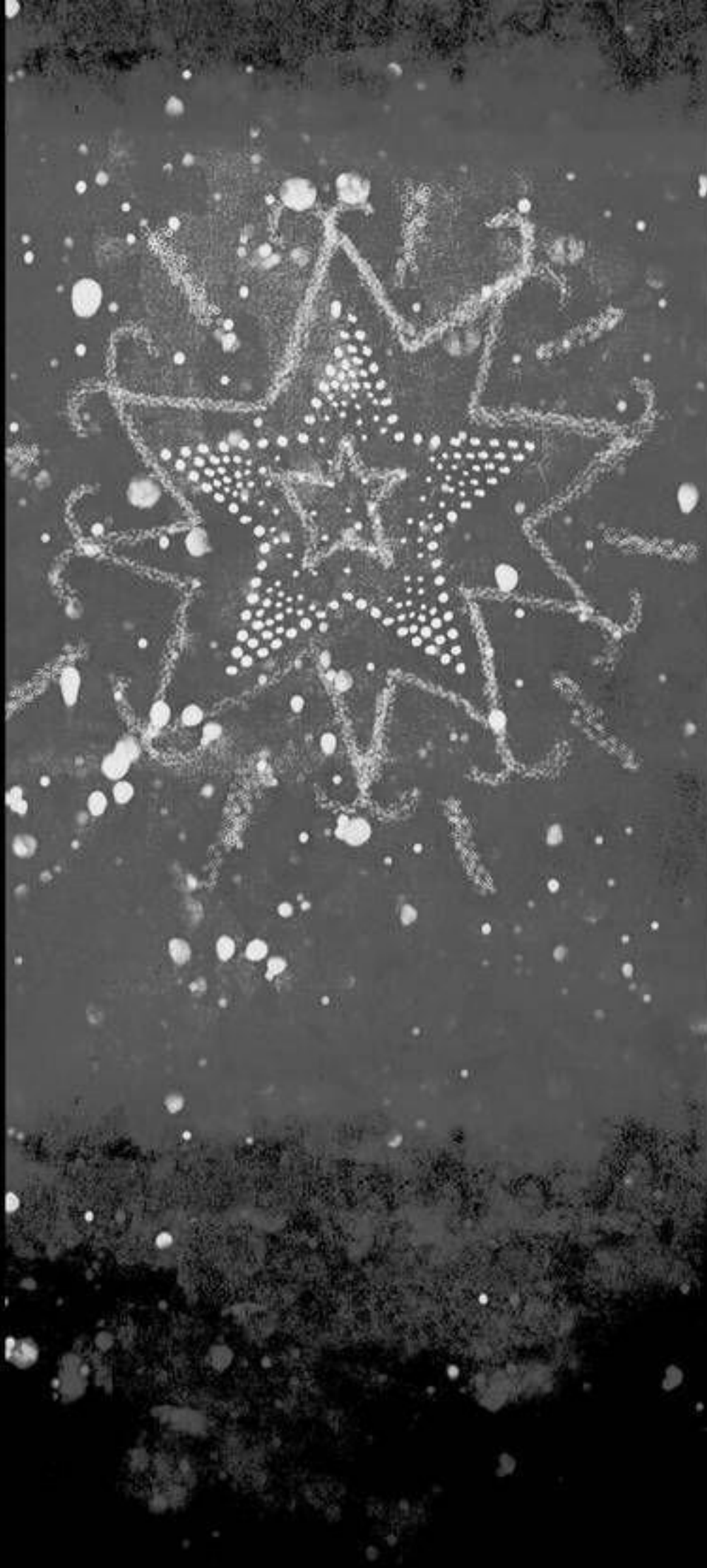
*the
heart
must
take
prece-
dence.*

*The
heart
rules
over
all
things...*

*...
and
all
things
come
from
the
heart.*



STORY AND ART BY
HIROYUKI ASADA



In the postscript of a previously published collection of my artwork, I wrote that “the pages of my favorite books are tattered.” I keep the books I love within arm’s reach, and I read them over and over. The tattered pages show how much I love them.

I hope you wear out the pages of *Tegami Bachi*.

Another adventure is about to begin. Let’s go!

—Hiroyuki Asada, 2006

Hiroyuki Asada made his debut in *Monthly Shonen Jump* in 1986. He’s best known for his basketball manga *I’ll*. He’s a contributor to artist Range Murata’s quarterly manga anthology *Robot*. *Tegami Bachi: Letter Bee* is his most recent series.



Tegami Bachi

LETTER • BEE

VOLUME 1

Letter and Letter Bee

CHAPTER 1:

Letter and Letter Bee 9

CHAPTER 2:

Crybaby Boy, Letter Girl 127



CHAPTER 1: Letter and Letter Bee





GOTTA
BE.

NO DOUBT
ABOUT IT.
THIS IS THE
PLACE...

STILL...

...I'VE NEVER
HEARD OF
A POST
MARKER SO
FAR FROM
TOWN.



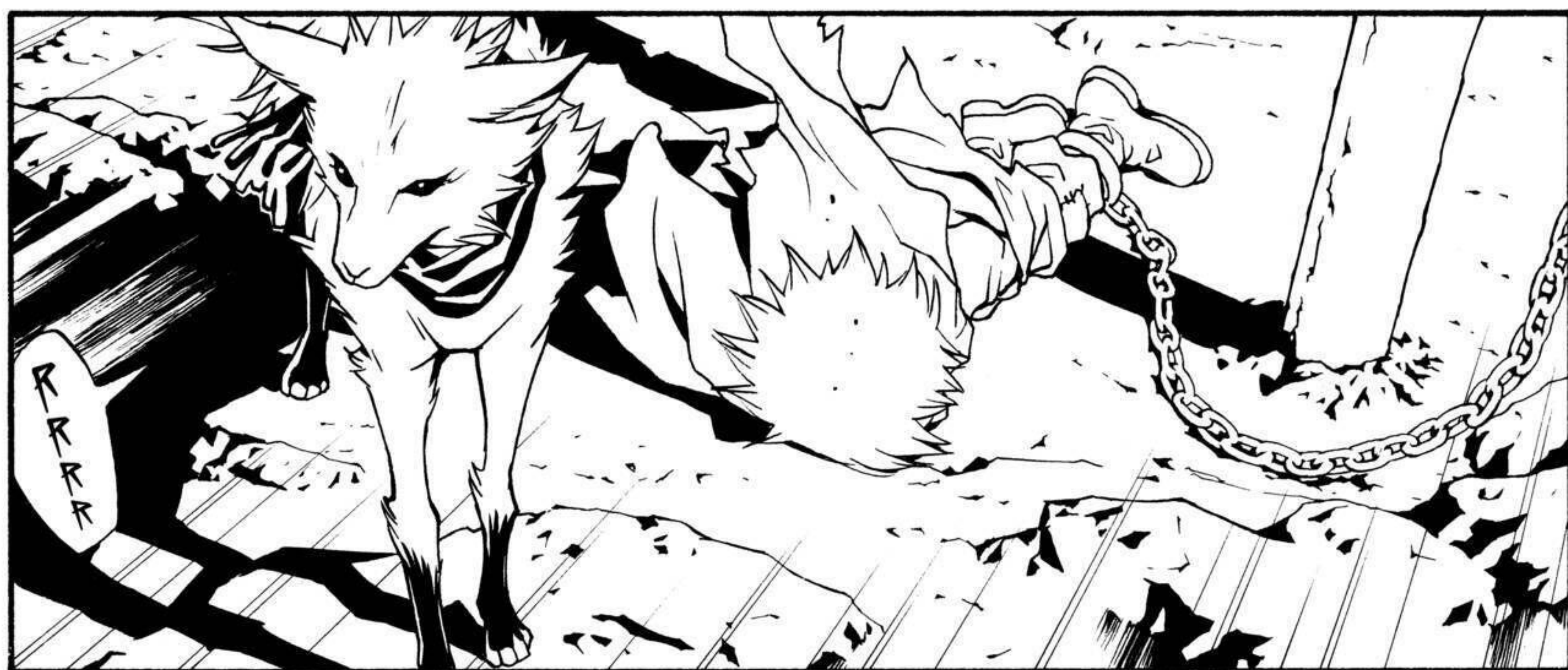
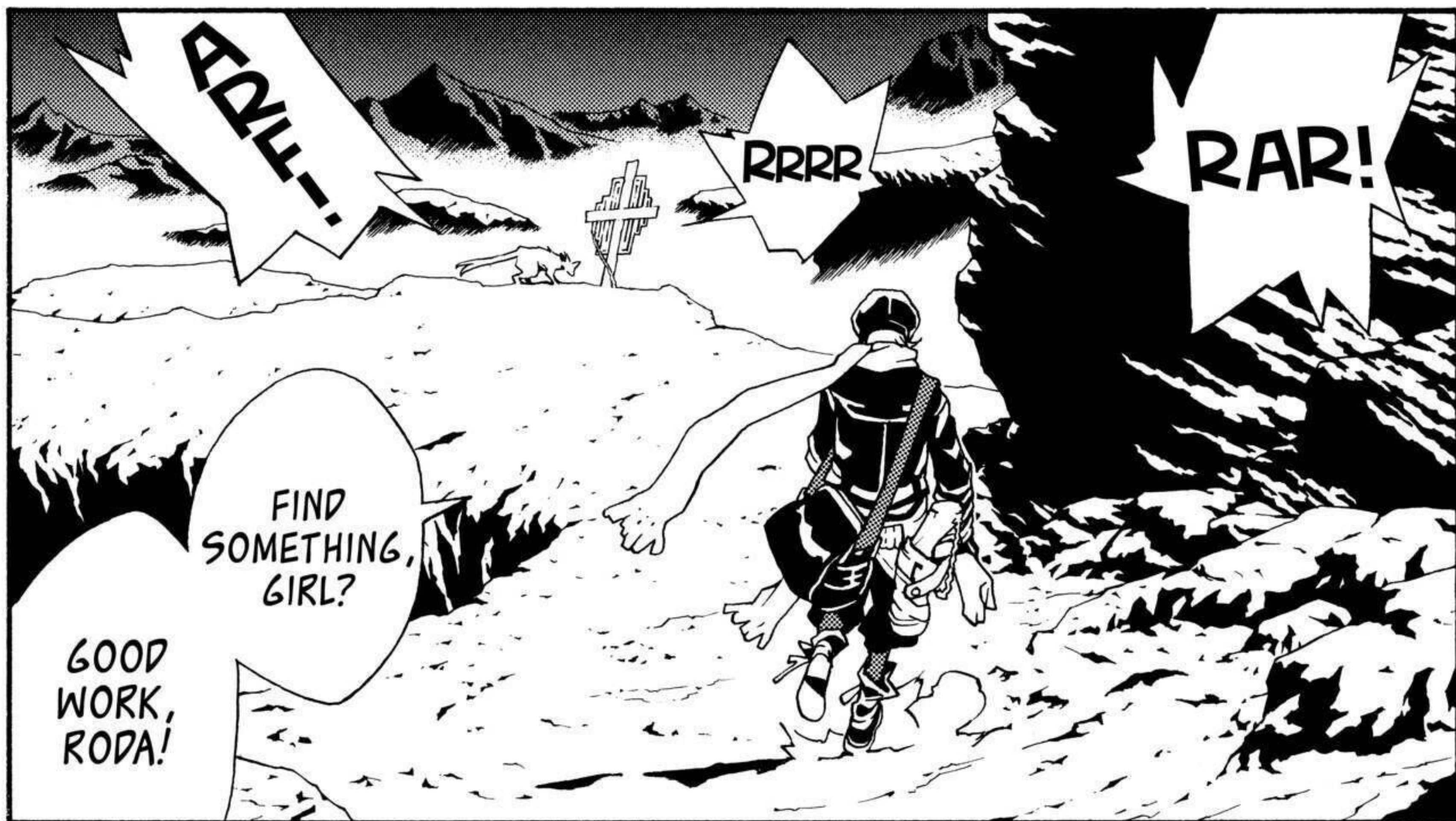
RODA?

RARE!

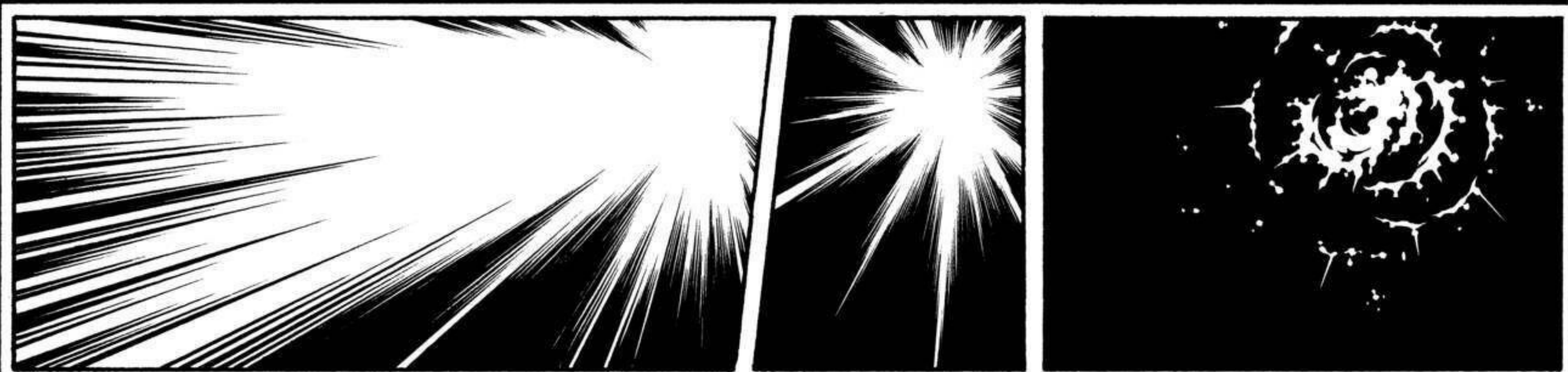
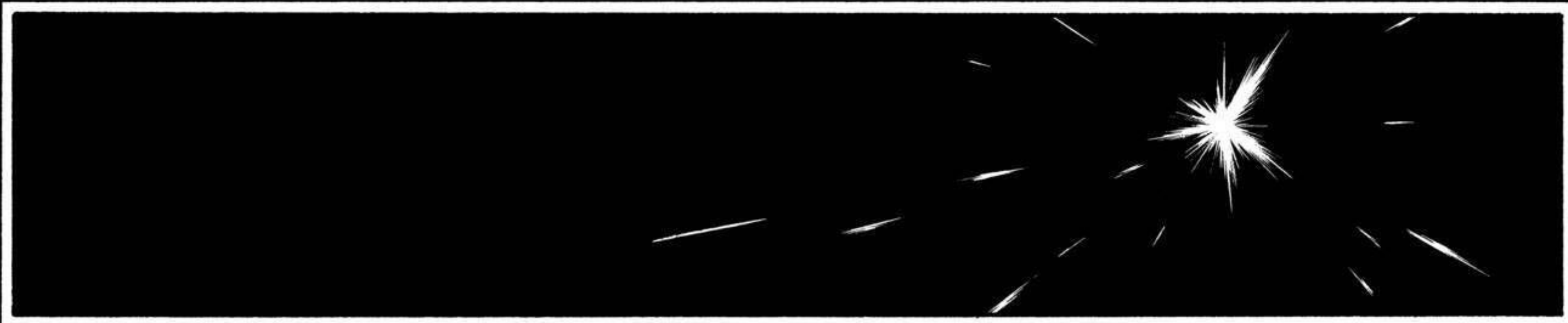
MUST'VE
BEEN A
WICKED
FIRE.

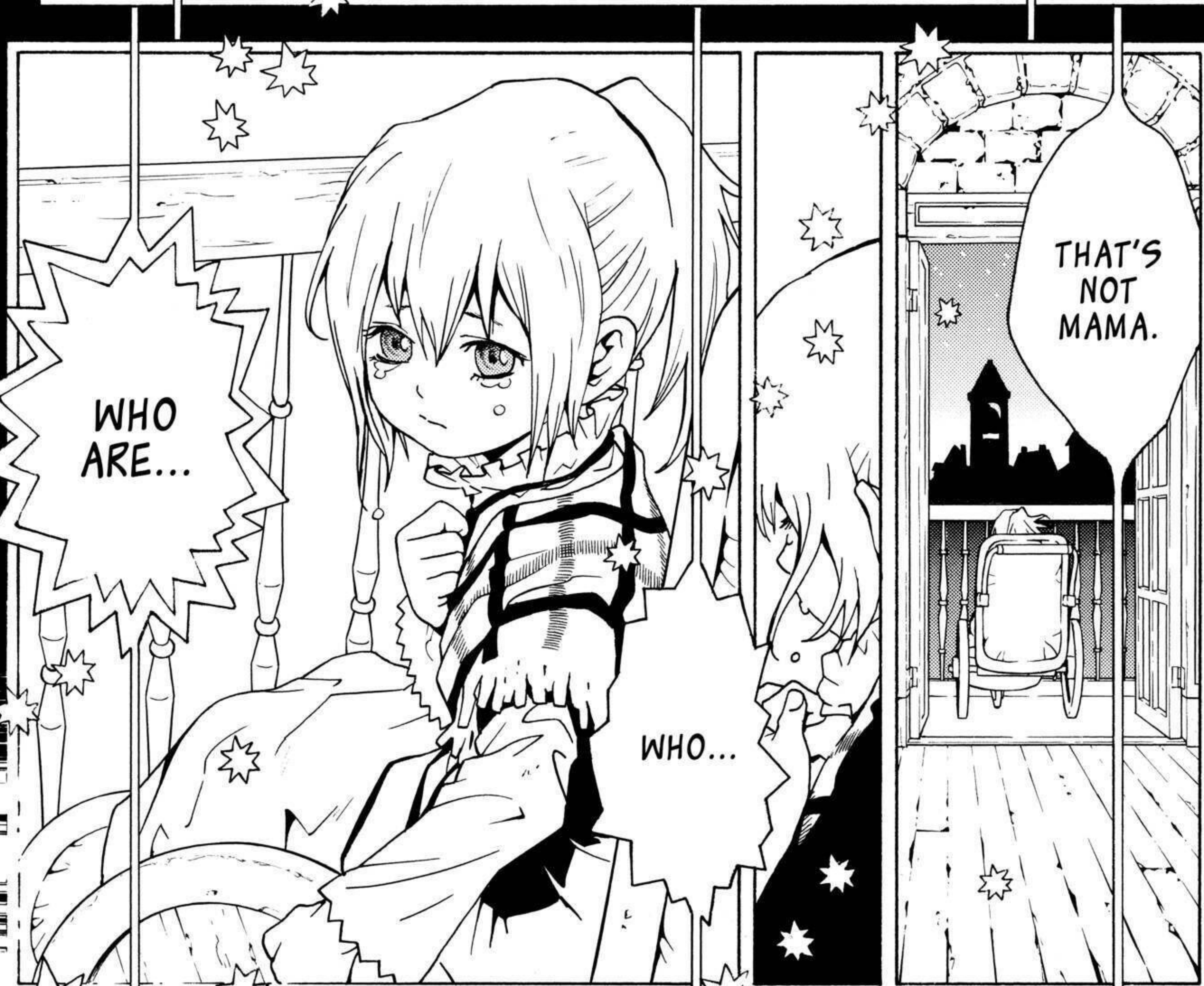
AND
ALL THIS
CHARRED
WRECKAGE...

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK,
RODA?













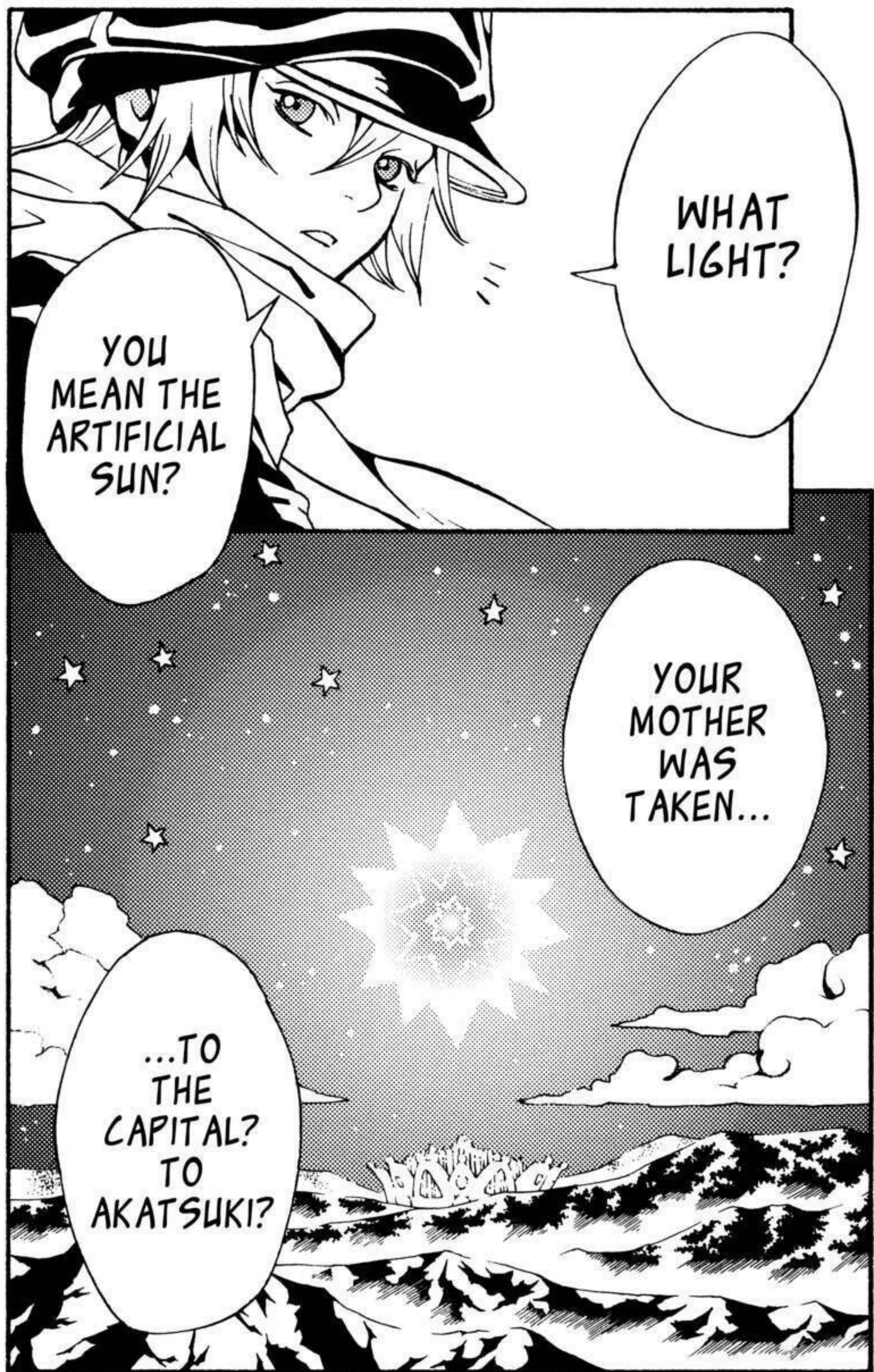


GIVE
HER
BACK!!

GIVE
BACK
MY
MOTHER!!



...



YOU
MEAN THE
ARTIFICIAL
SUN?

WHAT
LIGHT?

YOUR
MOTHER
WAS
TAKEN...

...TO
THE
CAPITAL?
TO
AKATSUKI?



IT'S
THERE ON
YOUR LEFT
SHOULDER.

I GOT
YOUR NAME
FROM YOUR
SHIPPING
LABEL.



T
O
K

SIT
DOWN AND
HAVE SOME
SOUP.

IT'LL
CALM
YOU
DOWN.

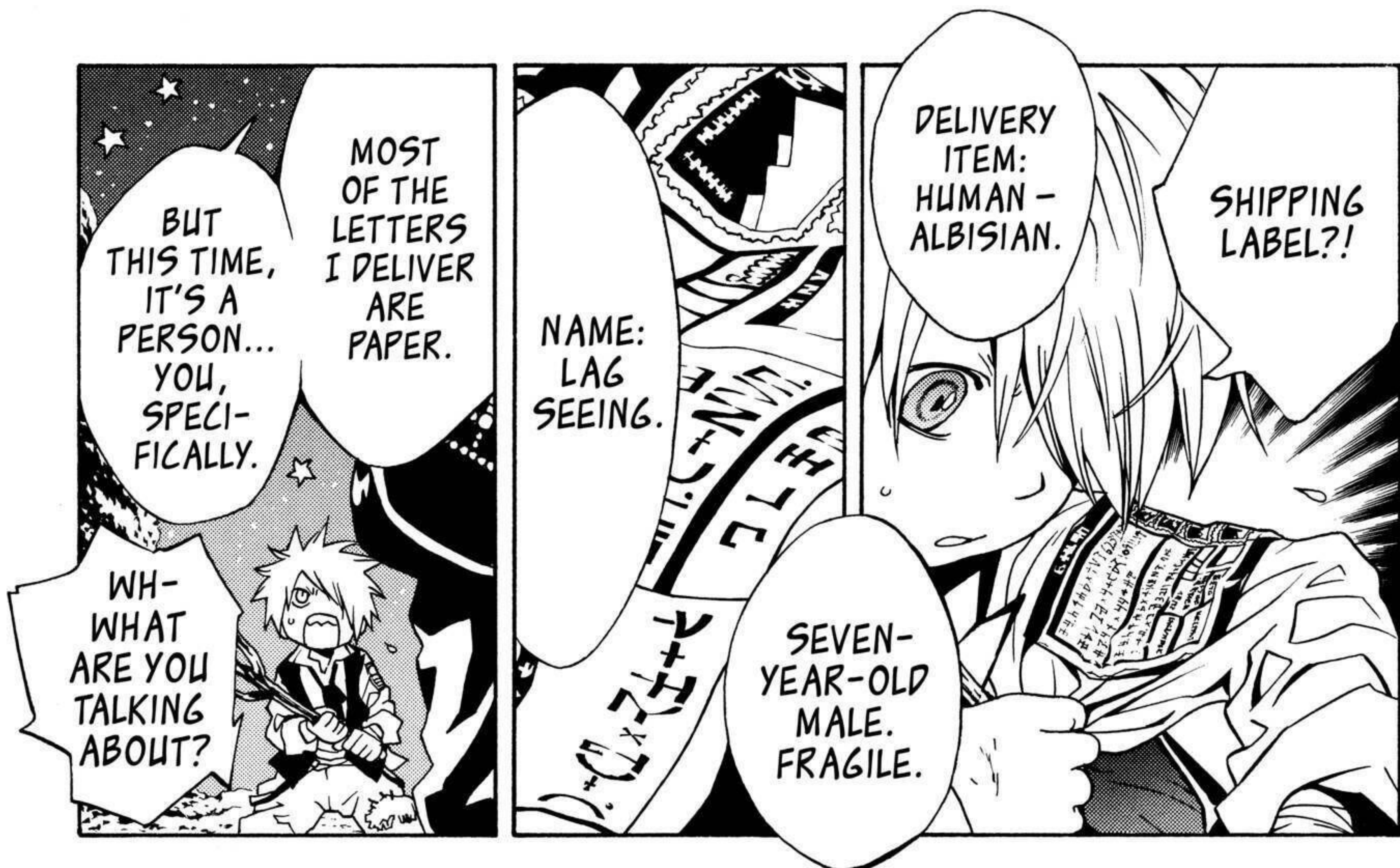


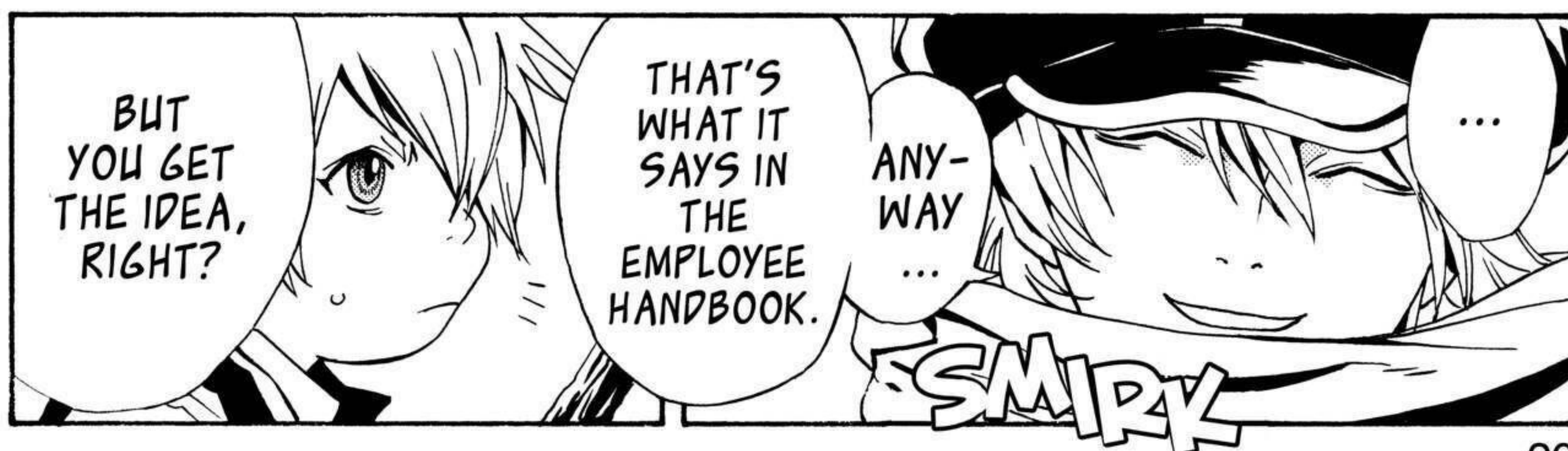
SHUK SHUK

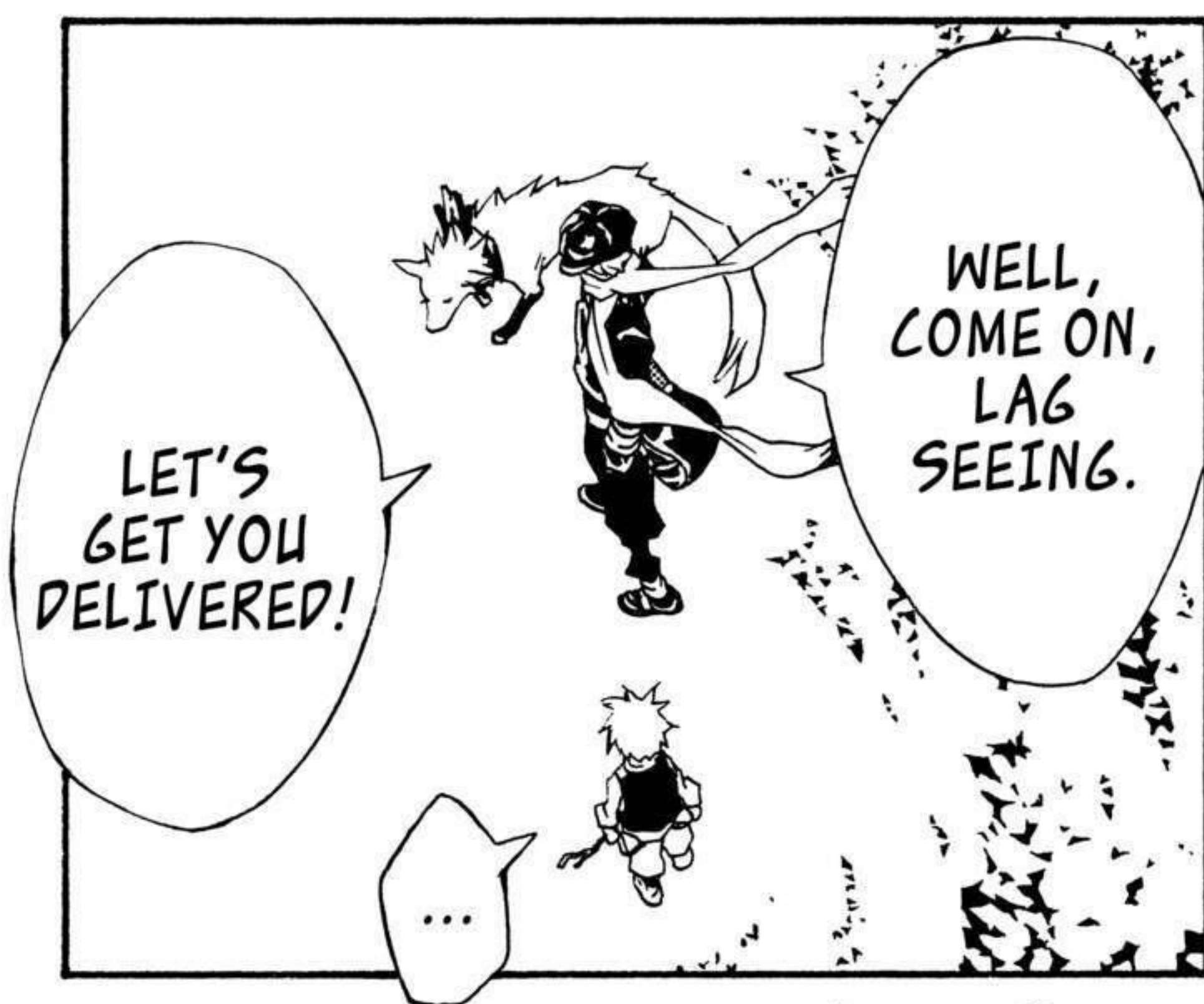
BUT I'M
GUESSING
YOUR HEART
HASN'T
QUITE
RECOVERED.

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU,
LAG SEEING.

SHUK SHUK









THE ADDRESS
READS YODAKA
DISTRICT -
SOUTH SECTION,
624137-22
CAMEL LITUS,
NUMBER
109.

LET
ME GO!
WHERE
ARE YOU
TAKING-

WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK I'M
WORRIED
ABOUT
YOU?!

WAA!

WUMP



SOMEONE
NAMED
ANN
SEEING.

THE
SENDER
OF THIS
LETTER
IS...

MAMA
?!



OH
MY
AUNT.
THE ONE
WHO
USED
TO LIVE
NEAR US.

FOR
DELIVERY
TO A
SABRINA
MARY.

LET'S
SEE
HERE...

PUT
ME
DOWN!

DON'T
YOU
WORRY
ABOUT
MY BACK!
THIS IS
MY JOB!

IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE!
YOU MADE
SOME
STUPID-

YOU'RE
LYING!

FOR
CRYIN'
OUT
LOUD,
LAG!

SQUIRM
SQUIRM
MAMA
WOULDN'T
MAIL ME! IT
MUST BE
THOSE MEN!

OUCH!
HEY!

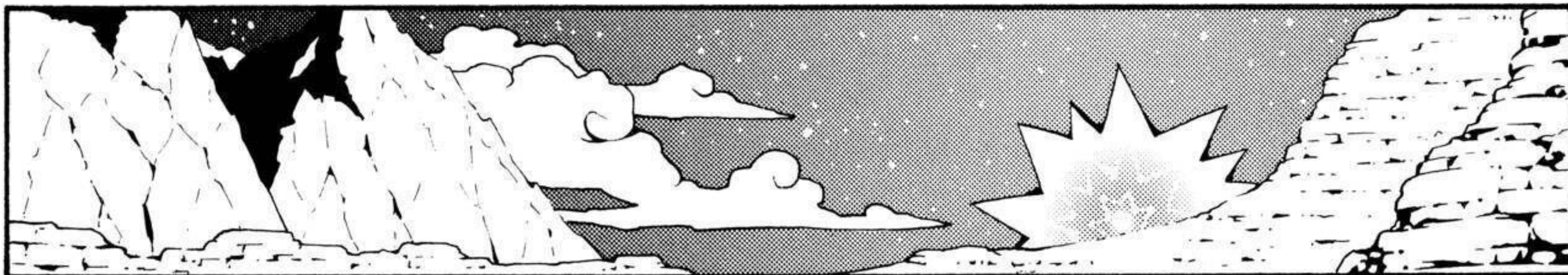
FWAP

Thump?

Herp?







W

O

O

O

The capital, Akatsuki, brightly lit by the man-made star that shines overhead, is home to the highest caste, the city of the chosen ones.



Amber-ground, surrounded on all sides by water, is divided into three areas by a caste system.



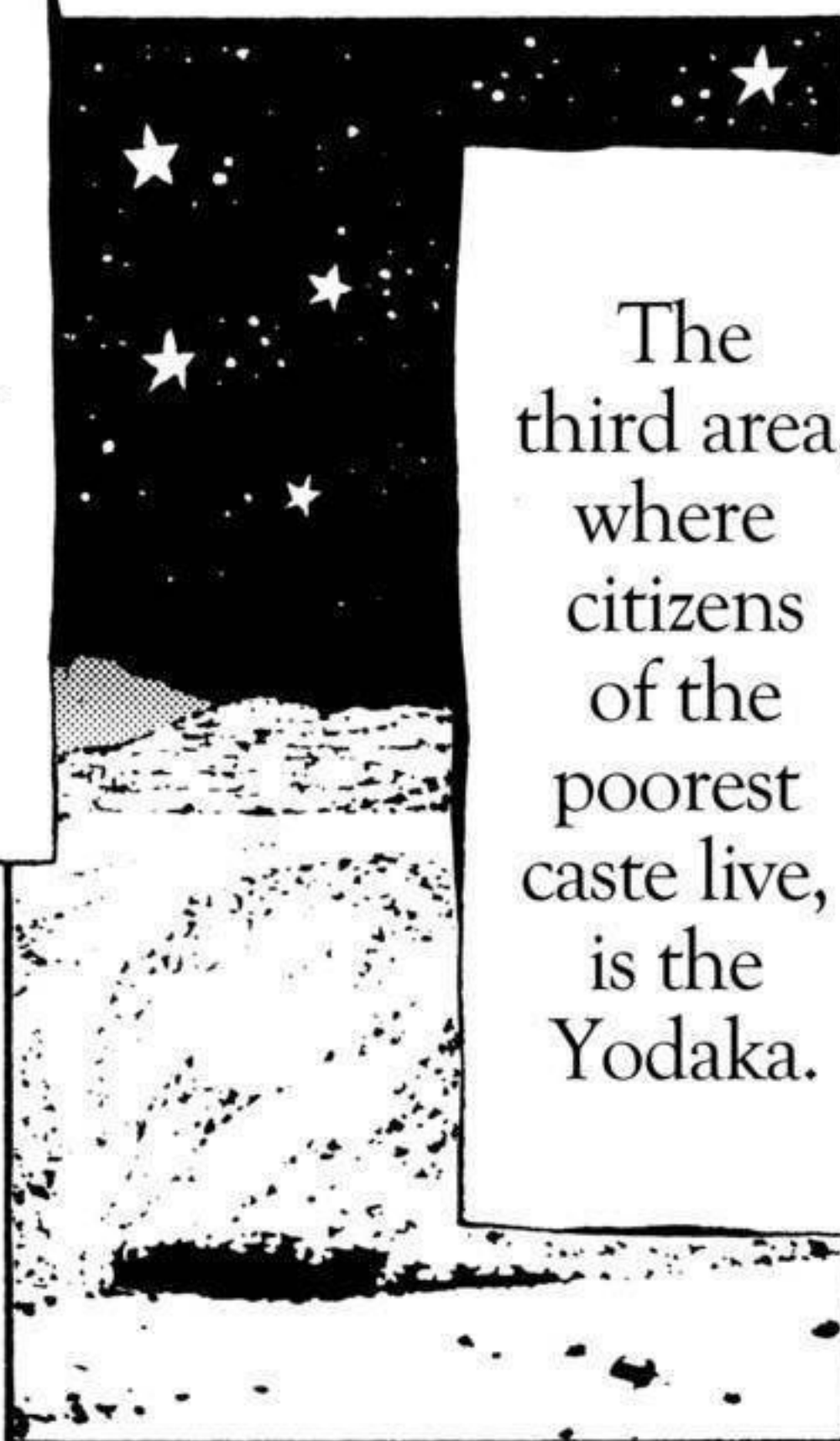
Only those with government-issued permits may cross the bridges.



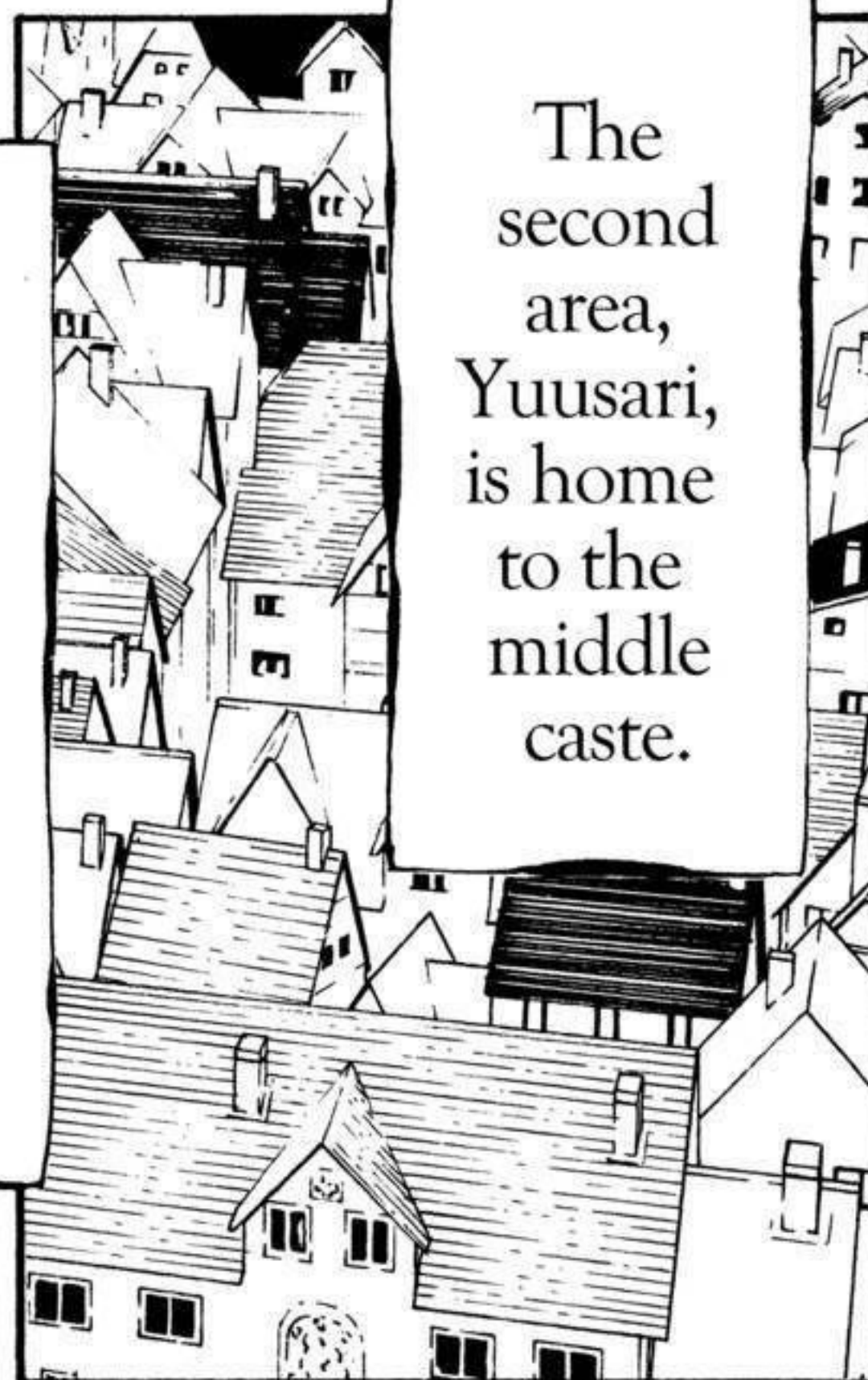
These three areas are separated by rivers that run to the sea.



The third area, where citizens of the poorest caste live, is the Yodaka.



The second area, Yuusari, is home to the middle caste.





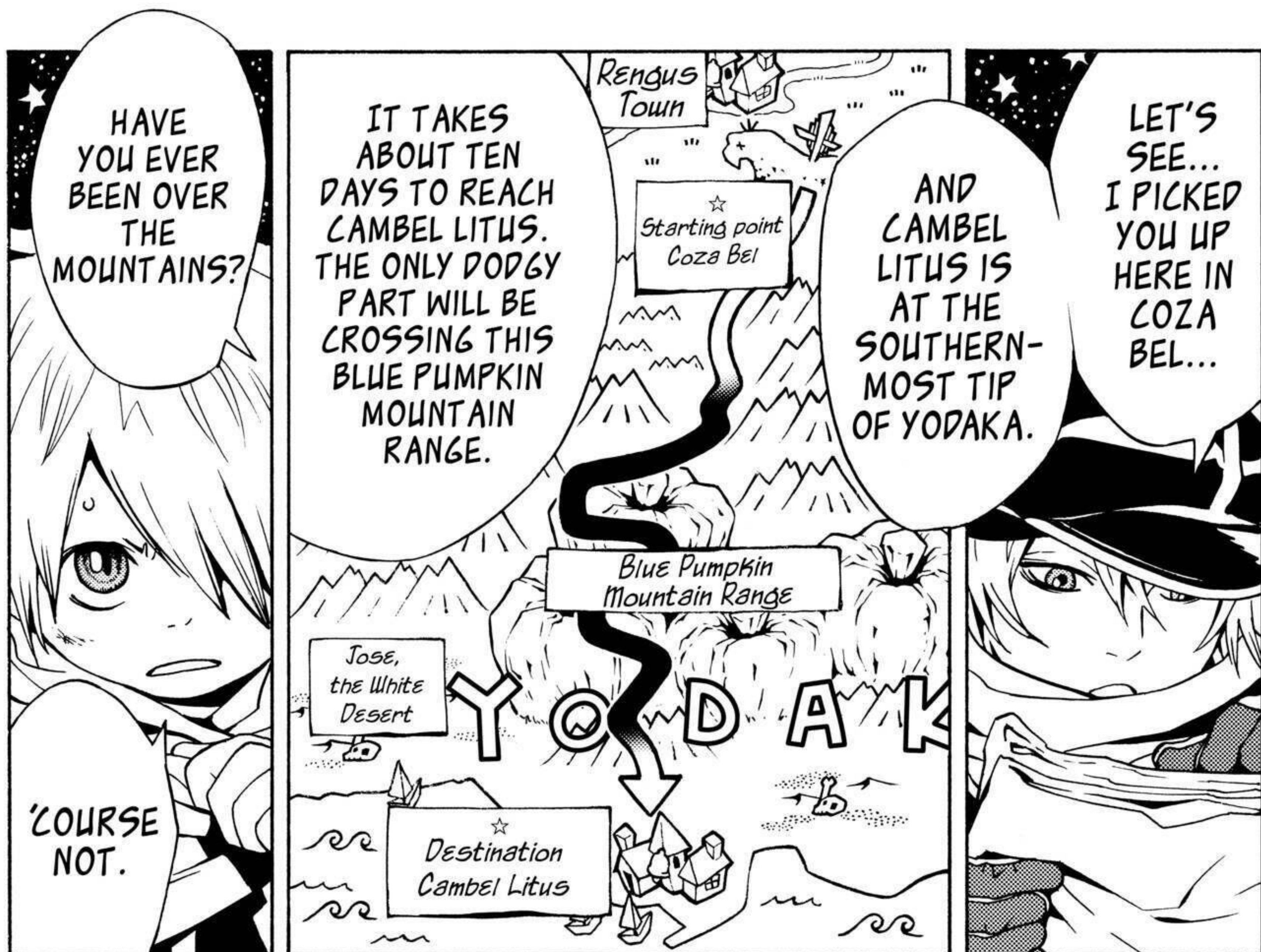
ALL
RIGHT
ALREADY!

PUT ME
DOWN!

DO YOU
PROMISE
TO WALK
NICELY?

The
farther one
goes from
Akatsuki,
the darker
the world
becomes...

The small
artificial
star exists
solely to
illuminate
the capital
city.



HAVE
YOU EVER
BEEN OVER
THE
MOUNTAINS?

'COURSE
NOT.

IT TAKES
ABOUT TEN
DAYS TO REACH
CAMBEL LITUS.
THE ONLY DODGY
PART WILL BE
CROSSING THIS
BLUE PUMPKIN
MOUNTAIN
RANGE.

Rengus
Town

Starting point
Coza Bel

AND
CAMBEL
LITUS IS
AT THE
SOUTHERN-
MOST
TIP OF YODAKA.

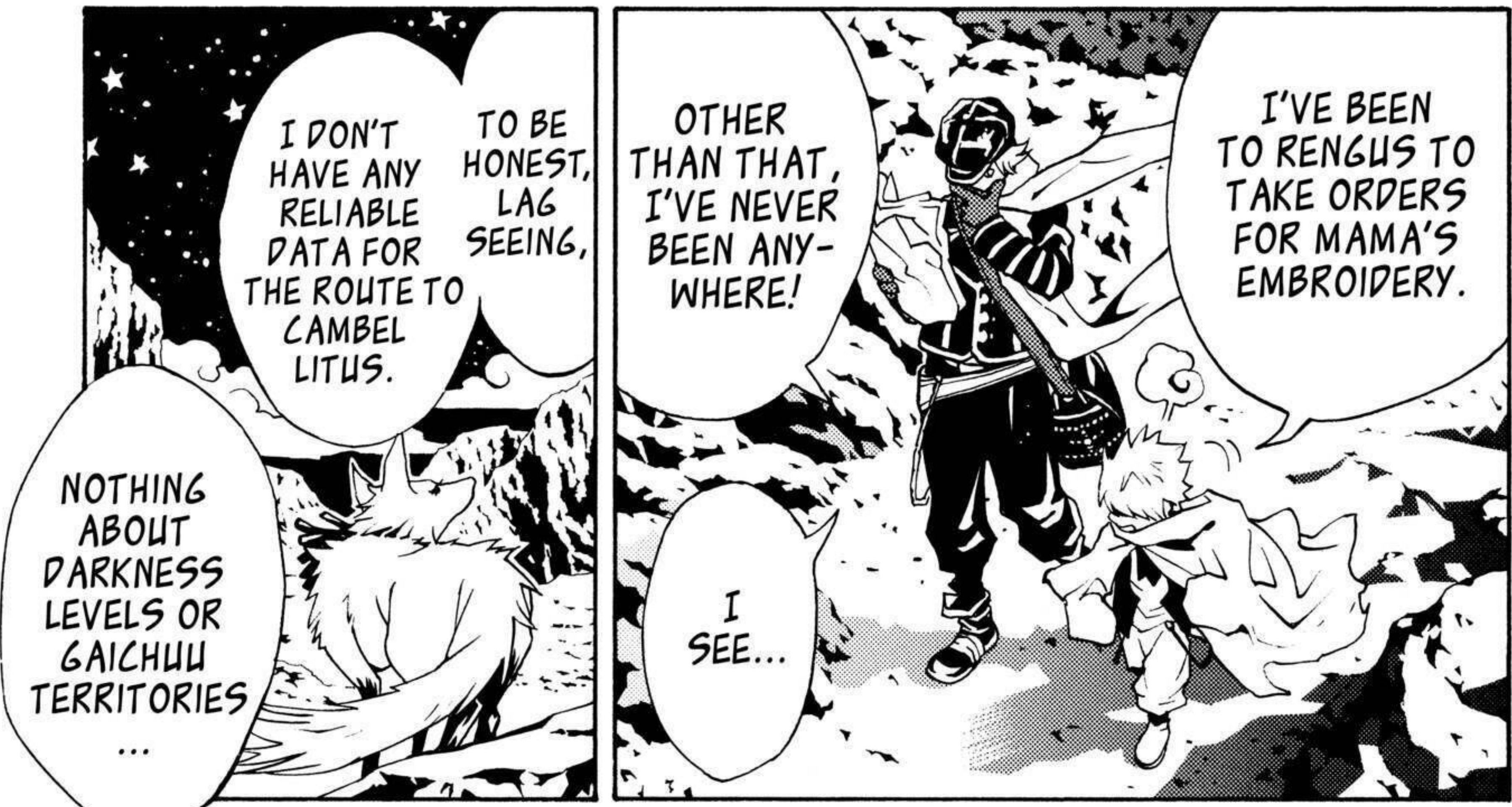
LET'S
SEE...
I PICKED
YOU UP
HERE IN
COZA
BEL...

Blue Pumpkin
Mountain Range

Jose,
the White
Desert

Destination
Cambel Litus

YODAK



I DON'T HAVE ANY RELIABLE DATA FOR THE ROUTE TO CAMBEL LITUS.

TO BE HONEST, LAG SEEING,

NOTHING ABOUT DARKNESS LEVELS OR GAICHUU TERRITORIES ...

OTHER THAN THAT, I'VE NEVER BEEN ANYWHERE!

I SEE...

I'VE BEEN TO RENGUS TO TAKE ORDERS FOR MAMA'S EMBROIDERY.

[GLOSSARY: 鎧虫 = GAICHUU = ARMOR + INSECT/BUG]



THAT'S RIGHT, HEART...

...

AND THEY'RE COVERED IN ARMOR THAT'S STRONGER AND HARDER THAN SWORDS. THEY CAN EVEN DEFLECT BULLETS. THEY LOOK LIKE...



GAICHUU TYPICALLY ATTACK WHEN THEY SENSE A PERSON'S HEART.

HEART?



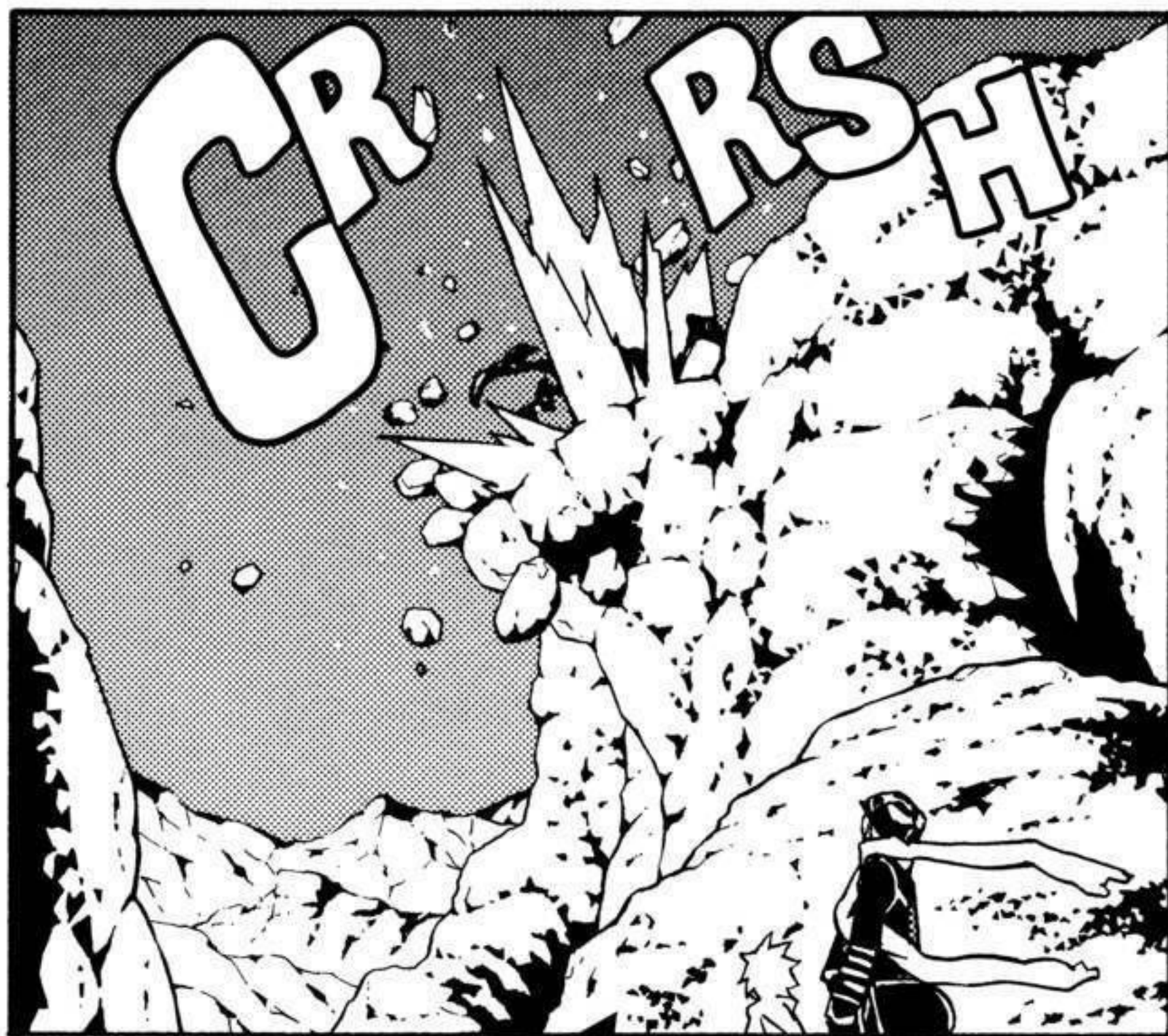
GAI...

...CHUU?

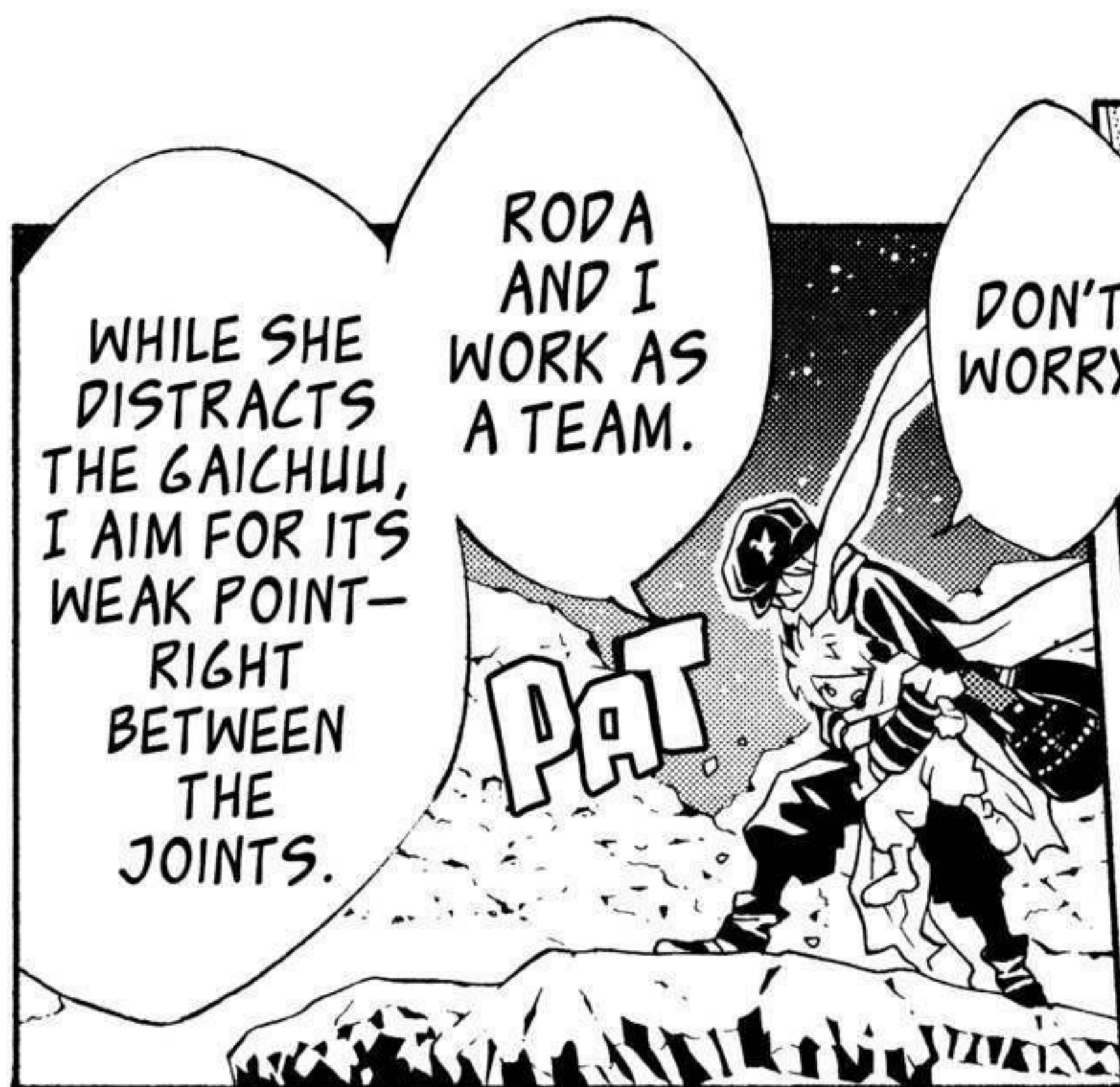


THEY'RE DANGEROUS CREATURES, VERY FEROCIOUS.

THEY LIVE IN THE DARKNESS BETWEEN TOWNS.



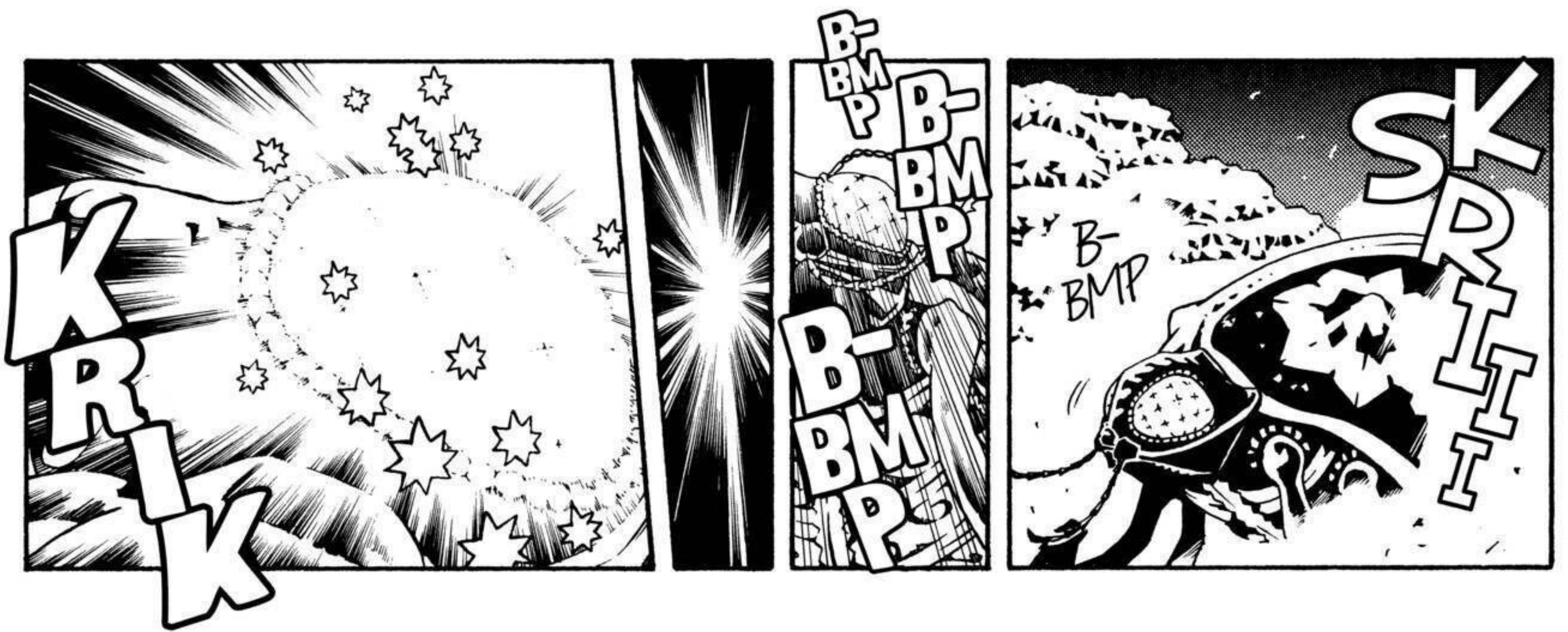


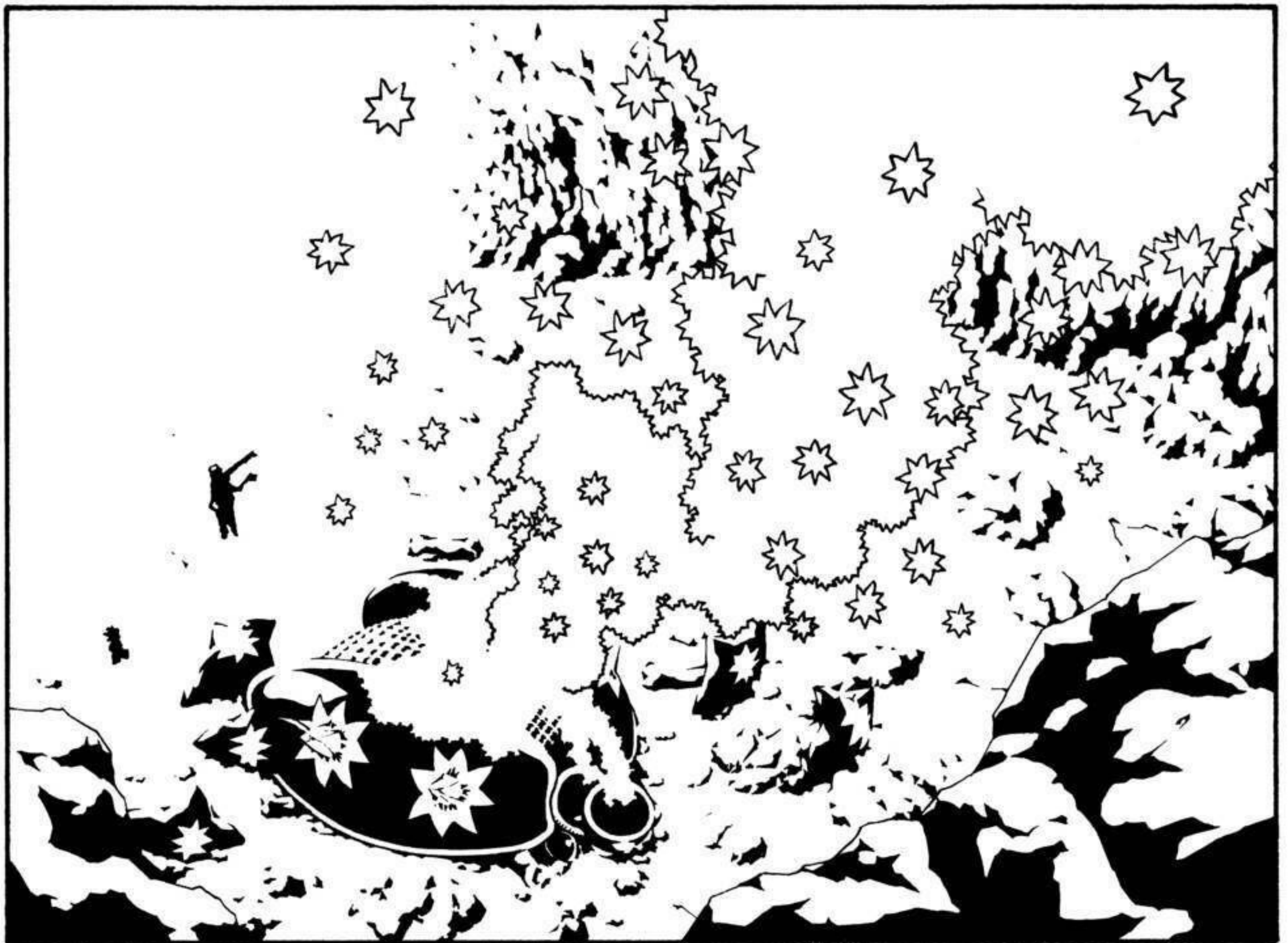
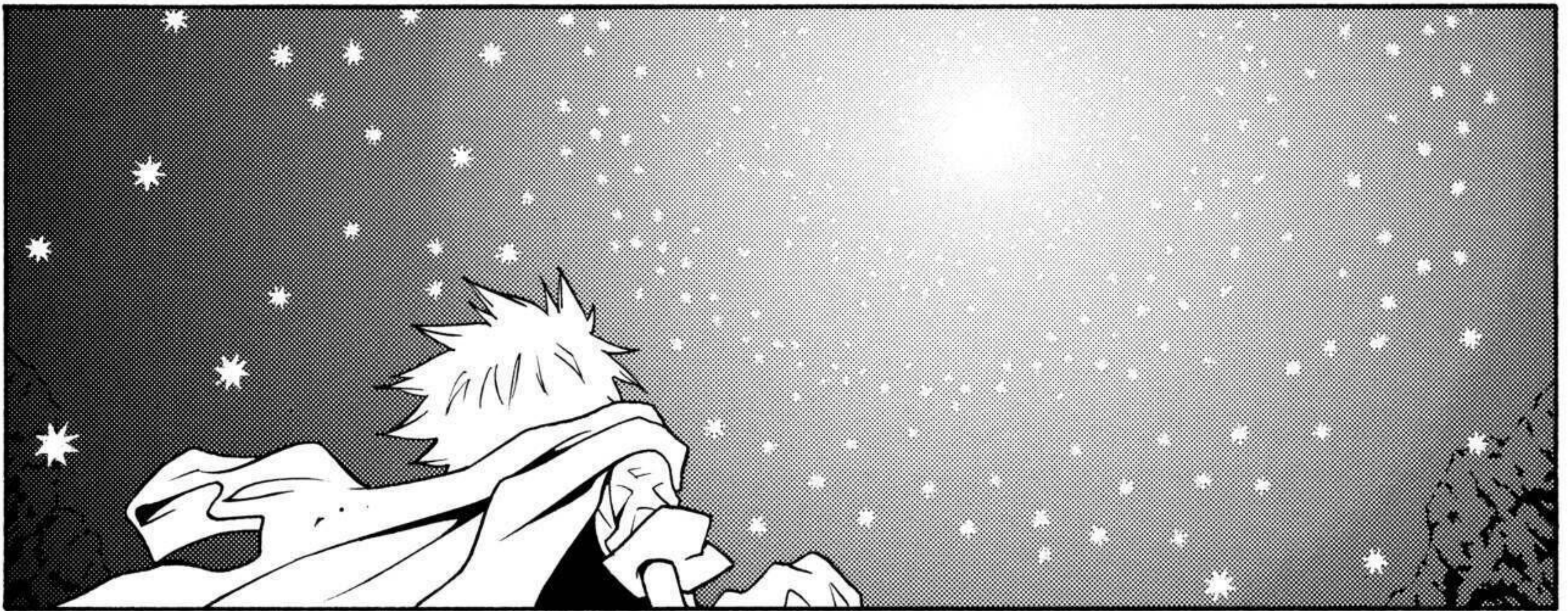




KUROBARI!!
BLACK NEEDLE!!









THE GAICHUU... IT WAS... CRYING.

I CAN'T EXPLAIN ...

I'M TELLING YOU, I COULD HEAR IT!

Snff Snff

RZRZ

Lgk



IT'S TRUE!!



... YOUR SPOON ISN'T MOVING!

NOW EAT YOUR SOUP!!

I DOUBT IT. SCHOLARS IN YUUSARI HAVE PROVEN THAT GAICHUU POSSESS NO HEART.

CHOMP..

GRUMBLE

MMFF!



AND NO MORE COMPLAINING!

SHUT UP AND EAT!

GAG!

BLECH! IT'S AWFUL!

GARRR

HOARK

PITOO





IT
WAS
GLOWING.

I
SAW
IT.

...

THAT'S
THE
OTHER
KEY
ELEMENT.

CLICK

EMBEDDED
IN MY
SHINDAN-
JU?

DID
YOU
NOTICE
THIS
BLACK
STONE...

INSECTS
?!

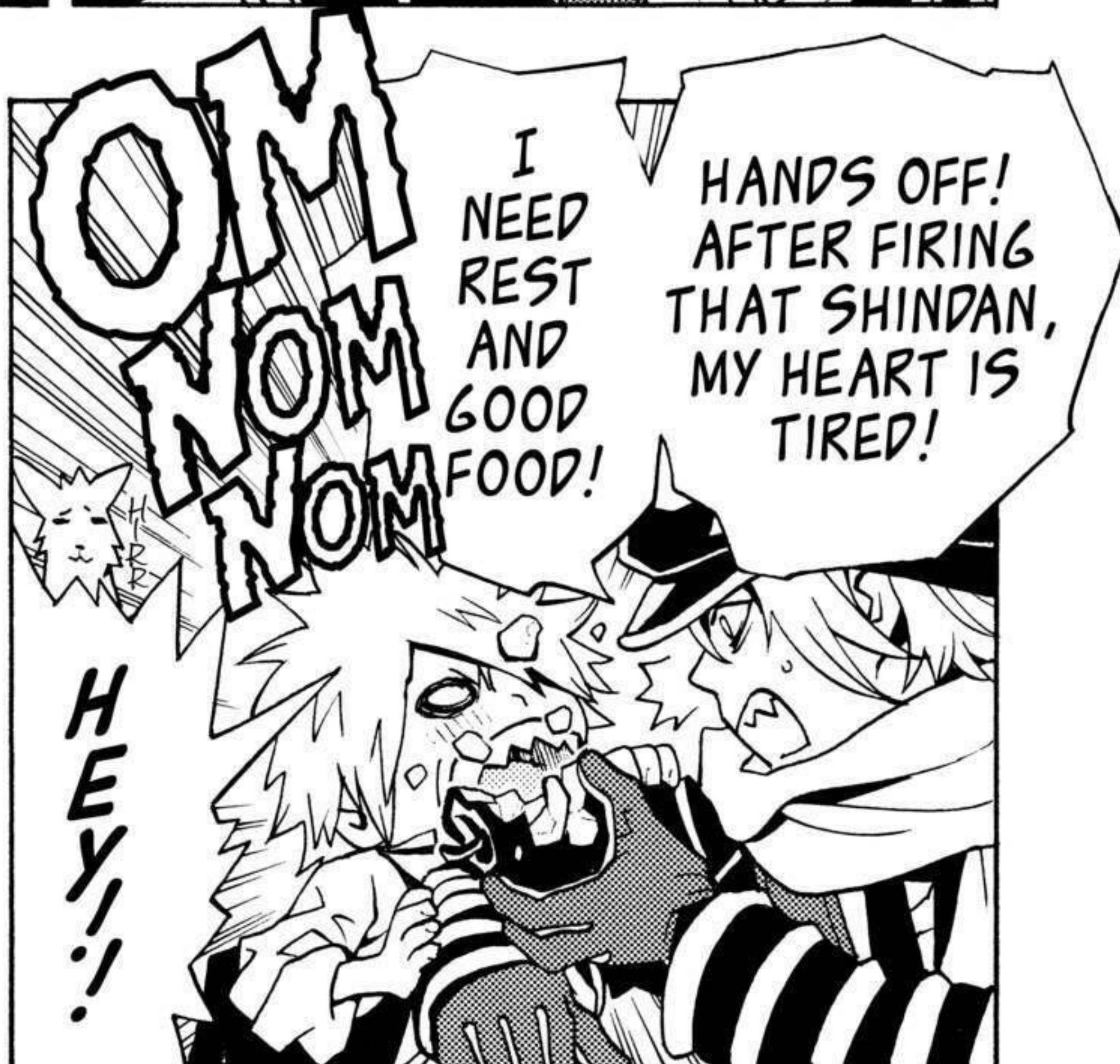
...SPIRITUAL
ENERGY WAS
CARRIED IN
THE BODIES
OF TINY
INSECTS.

DURING
ANCIENT
TIMES...

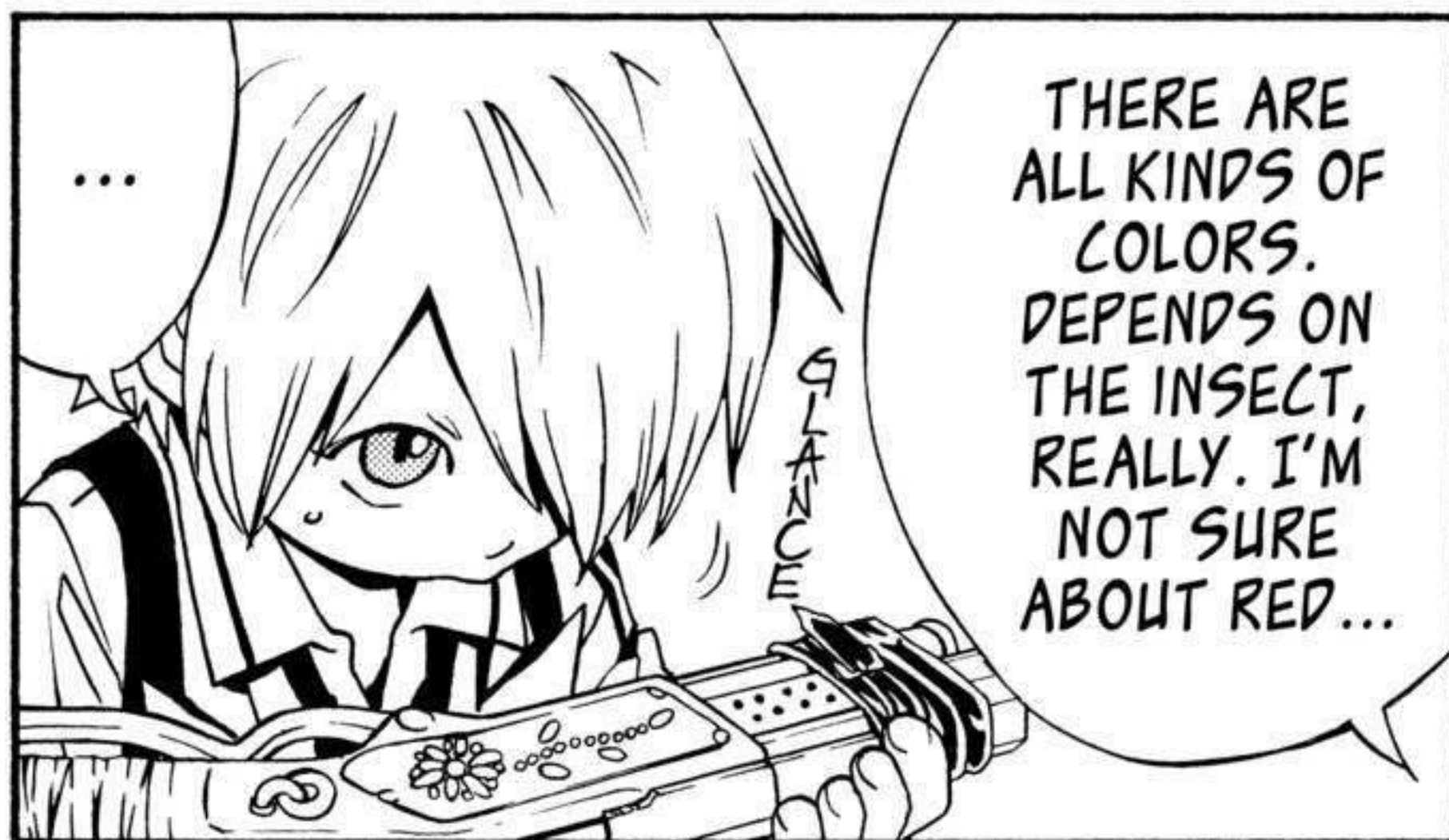
...THAT
ENERGY
WAS
PRESERVED
IN SPIRIT
AMBER.

THIS
STONE IS
MADE OF
SPIRIT
AMBER.

WHEN
THESE
SPIRIT
INSECTS
GOT
TRAPPED
IN TREE
RESIN...







...
THERE ARE
ALL KINDS OF
COLORS.
DEPENDS ON
THE INSECT,
REALLY. I'M
NOT SURE
ABOUT RED...



HMM...

BY
THE WAY...
THOSE
SPIRIT
AMBER
THINGS
...

DO
THEY
COME
IN
RED?

RED?



...
OOPS
...

I THINK
I'VE SAID
TOO MUCH.



...
LET'S
TURN IN
FOR THE
NIGHT.

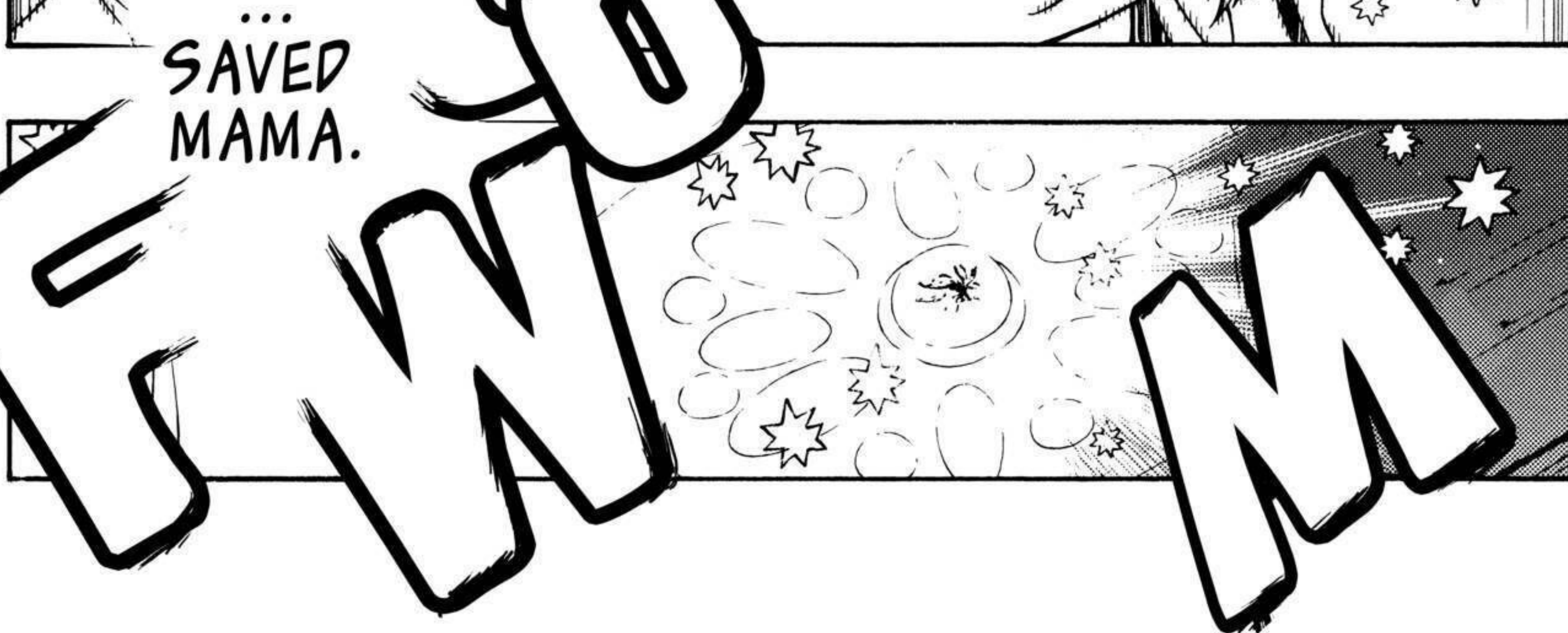
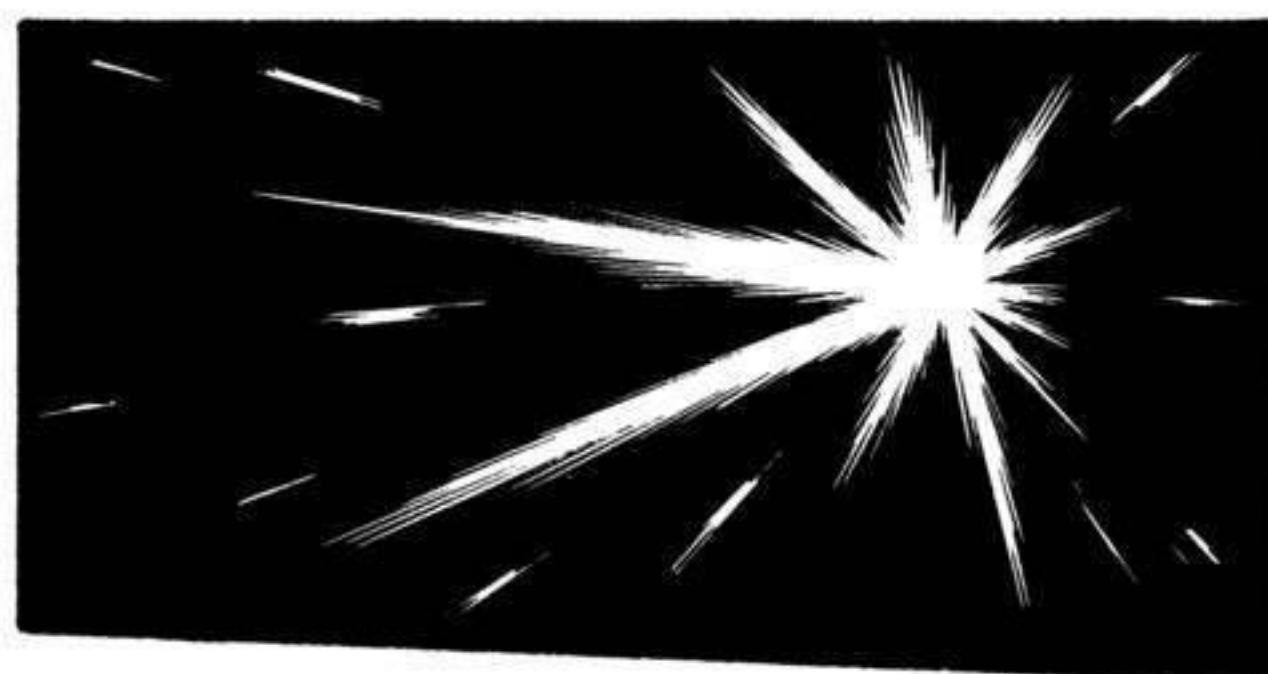
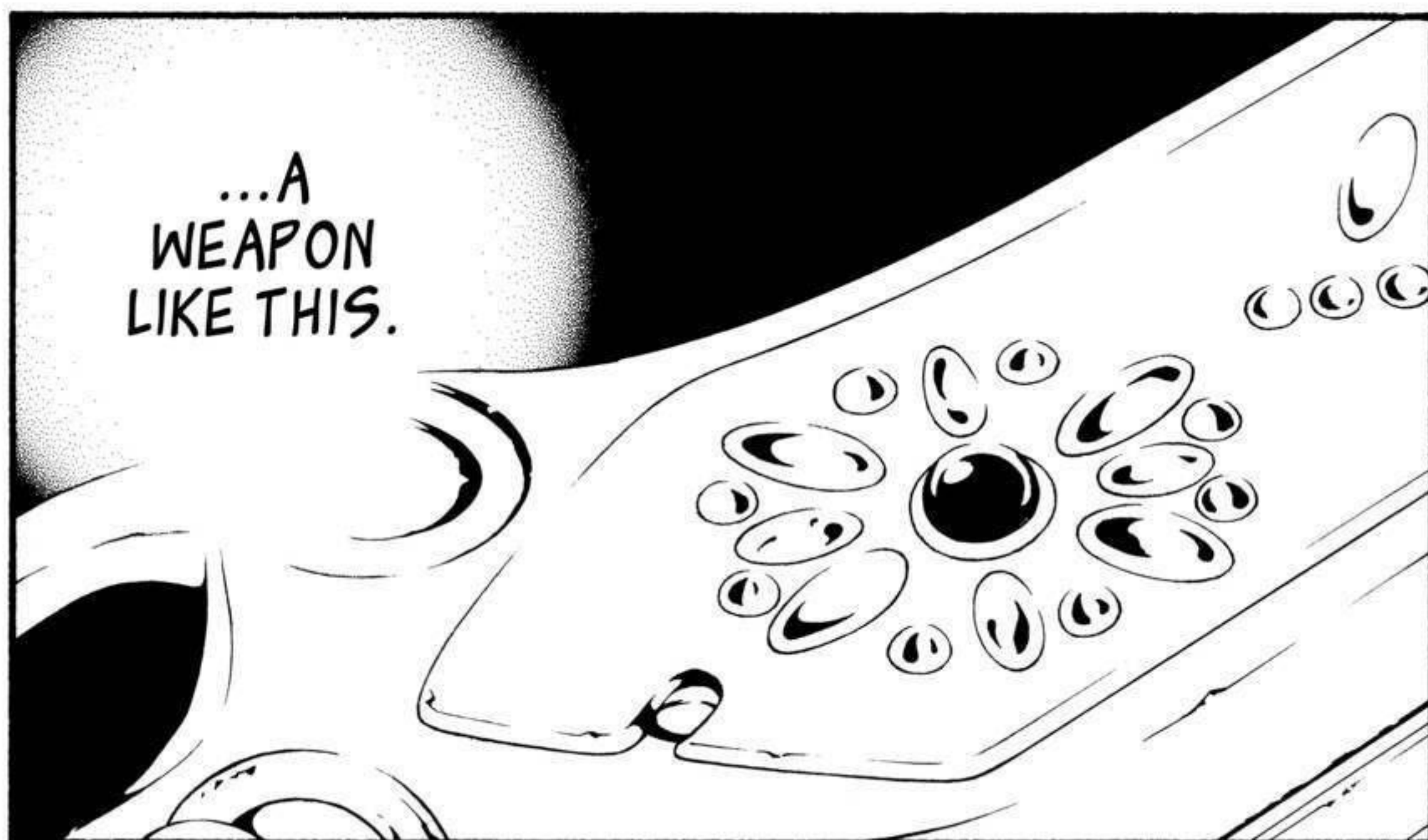


I MUST
REALLY BE
TIRED.

TELLING
ALL THIS
TO A
CIVILIAN!



SKUT....





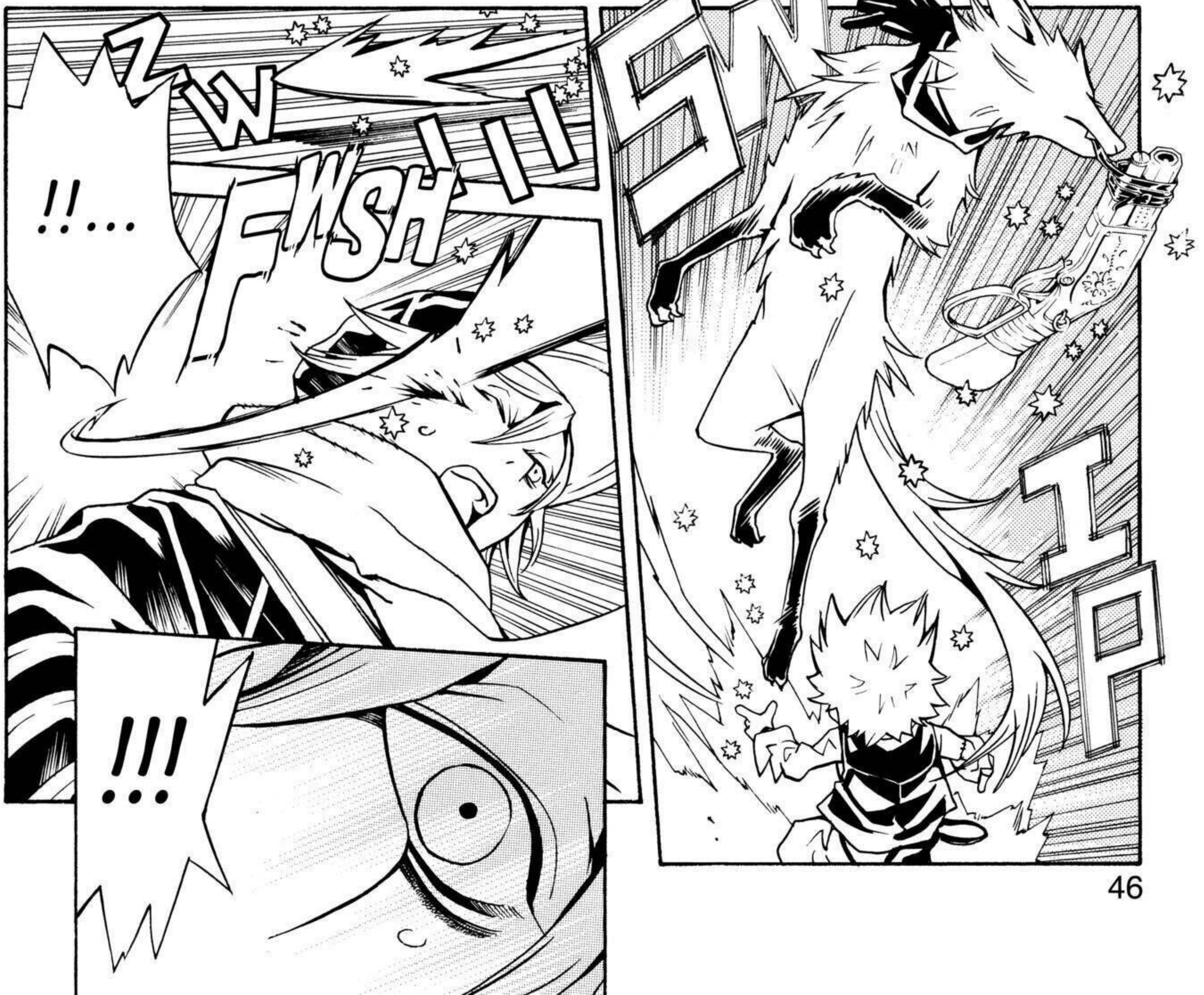
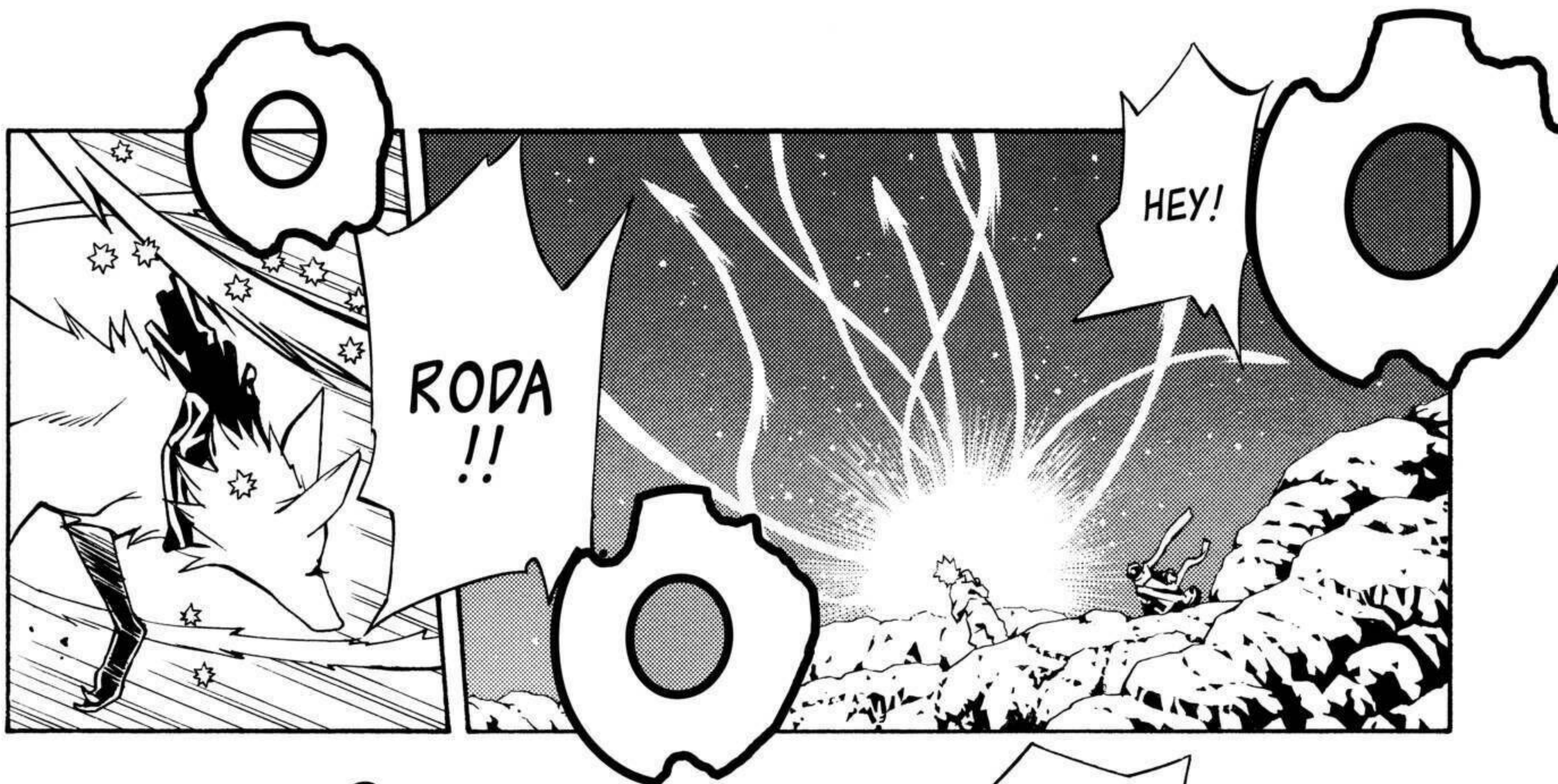


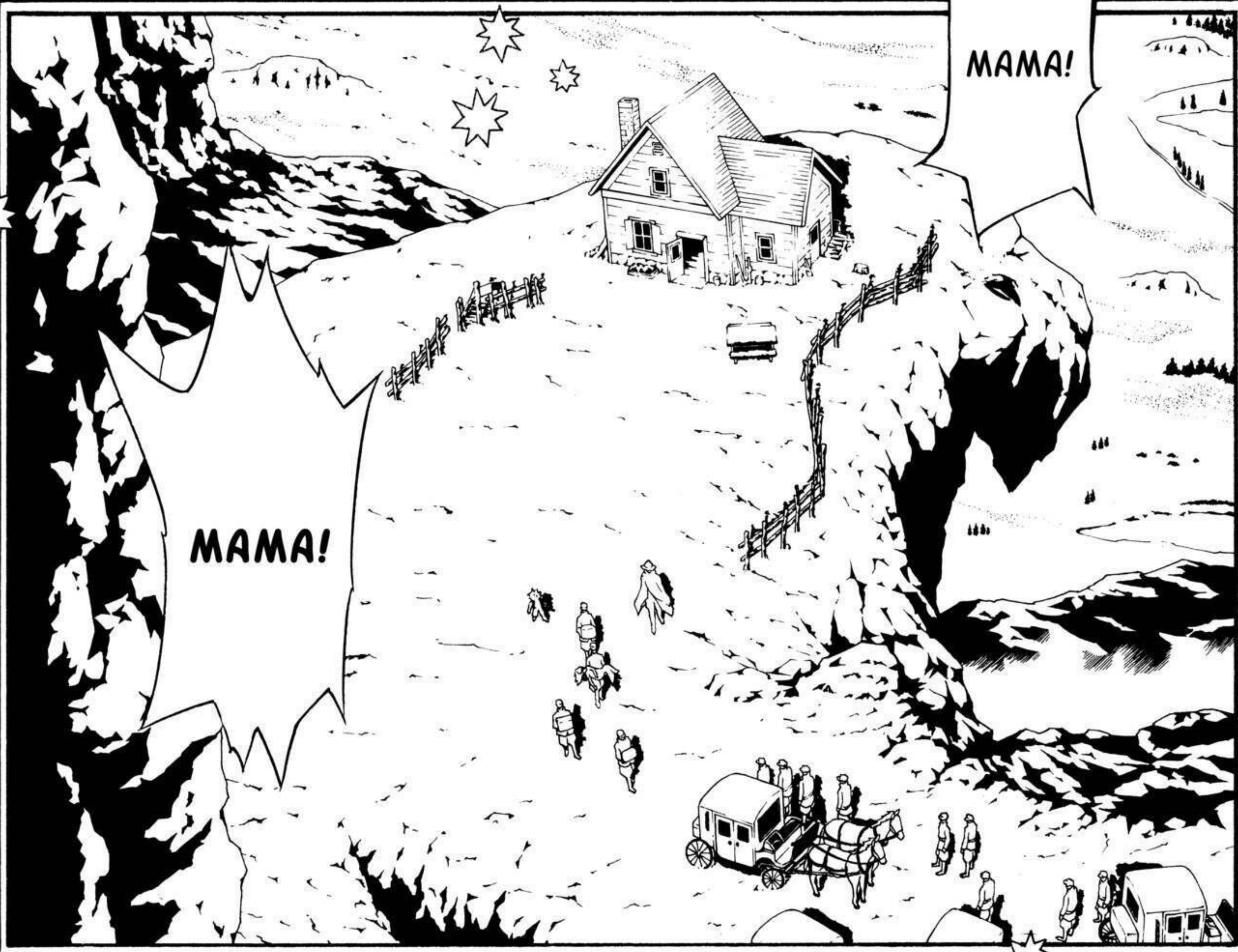
LAG!!!

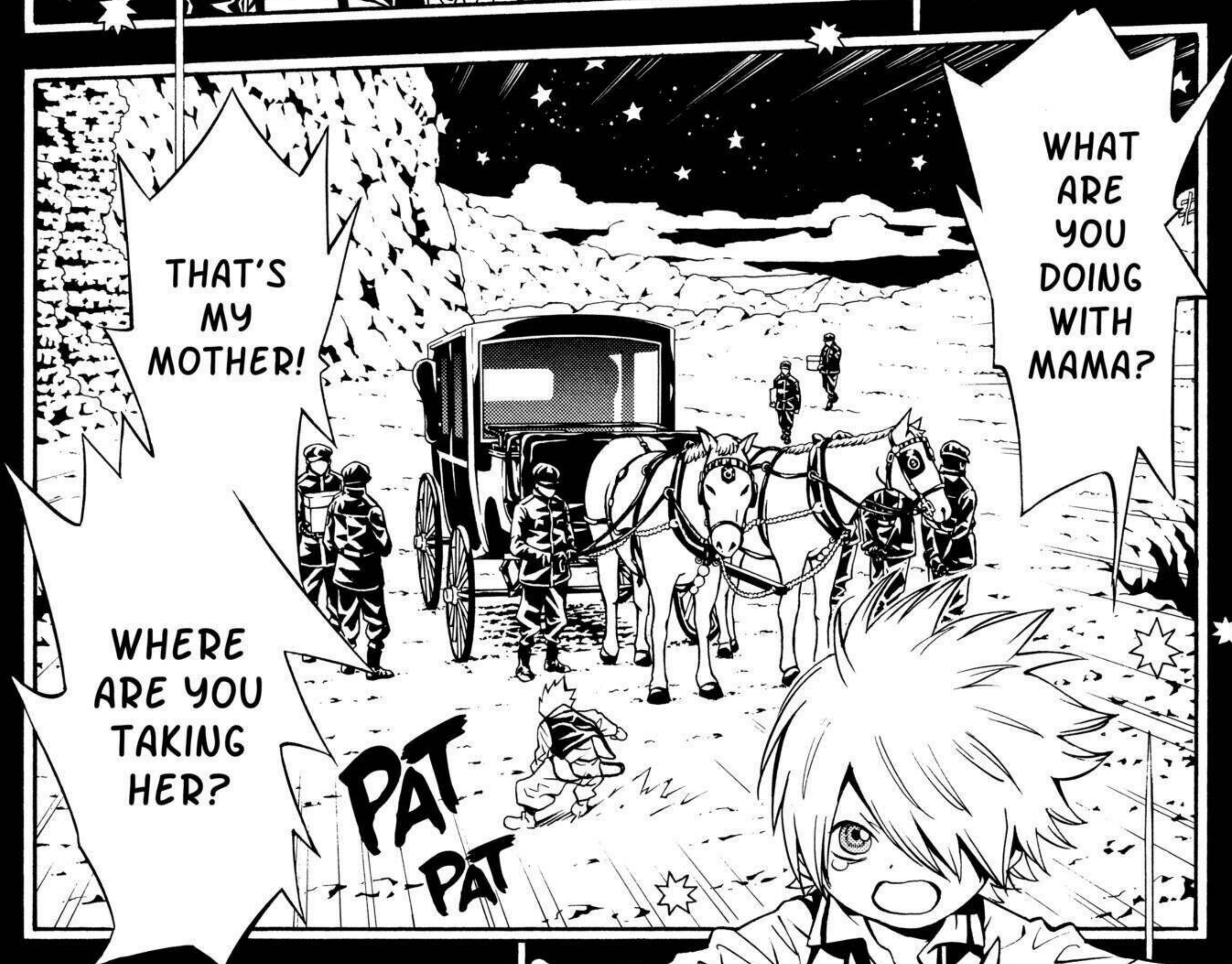
PUT
DOWN
THE
GUN!

NO!!!

!!!







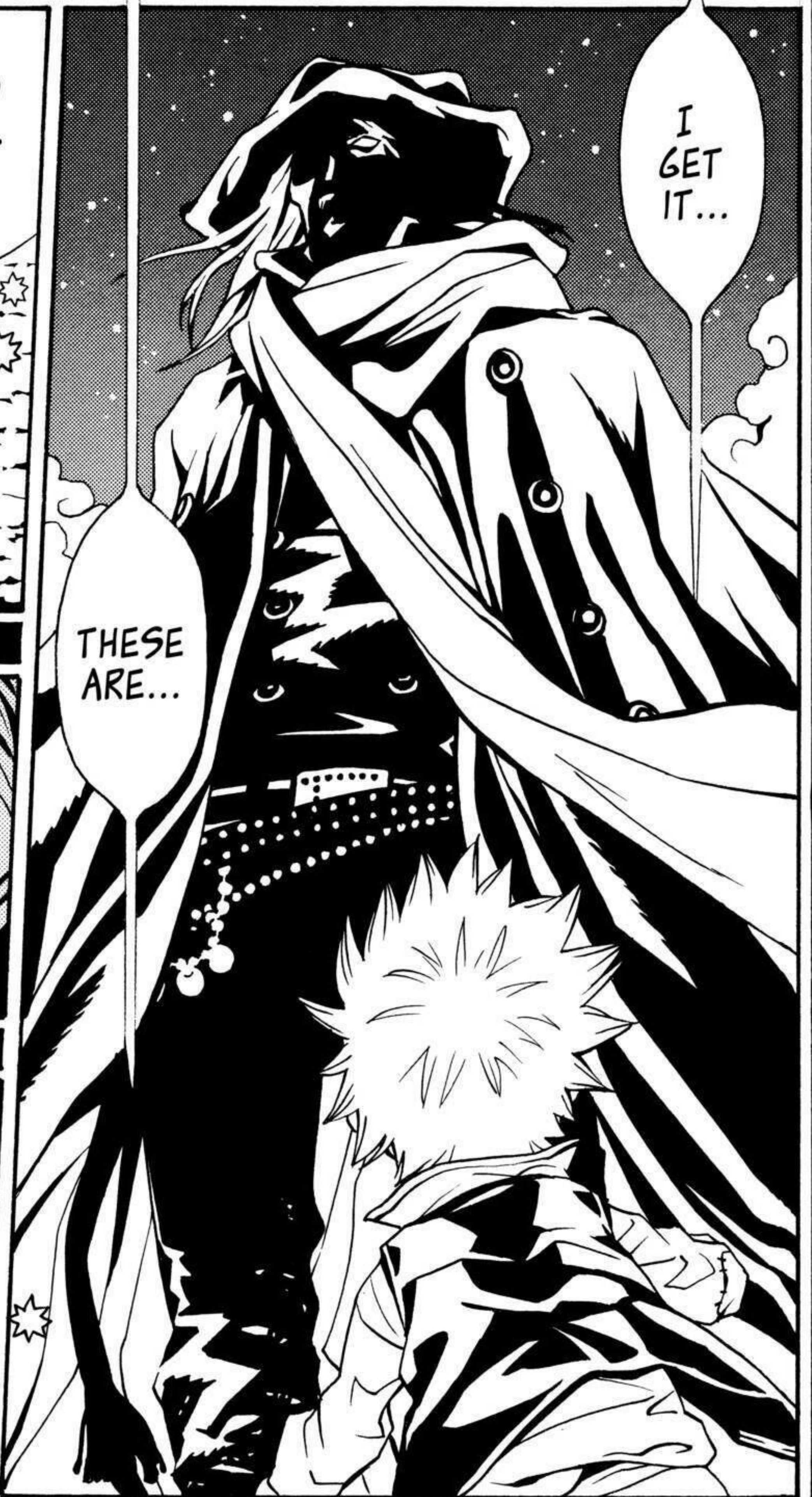


DO IT.

YOU HEARD 'IM, BOYS! BURN IT DOWN!



...LAG'S MEMORIES.



I GET IT...

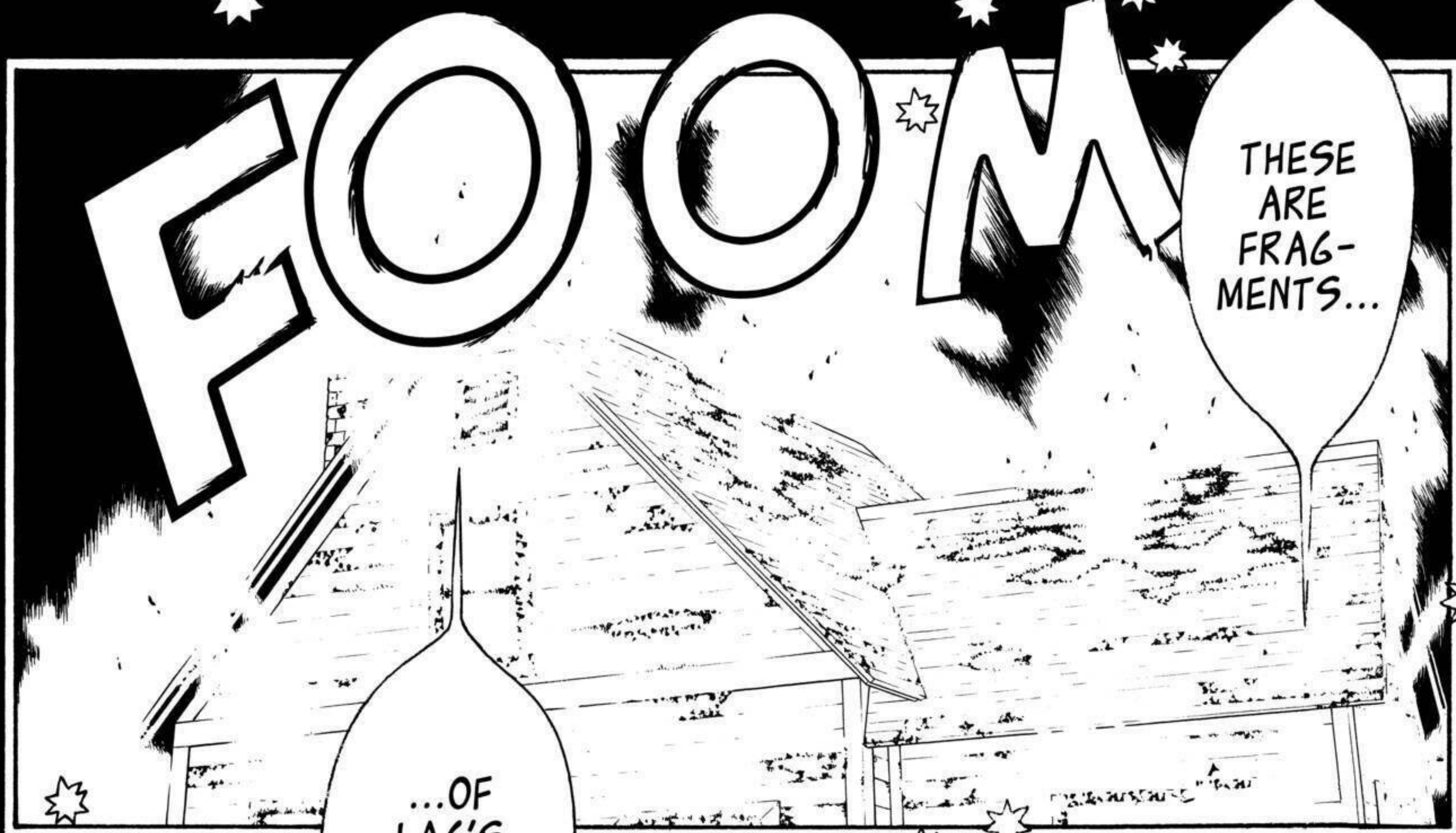
THESE ARE...



FRAGMENTS ...

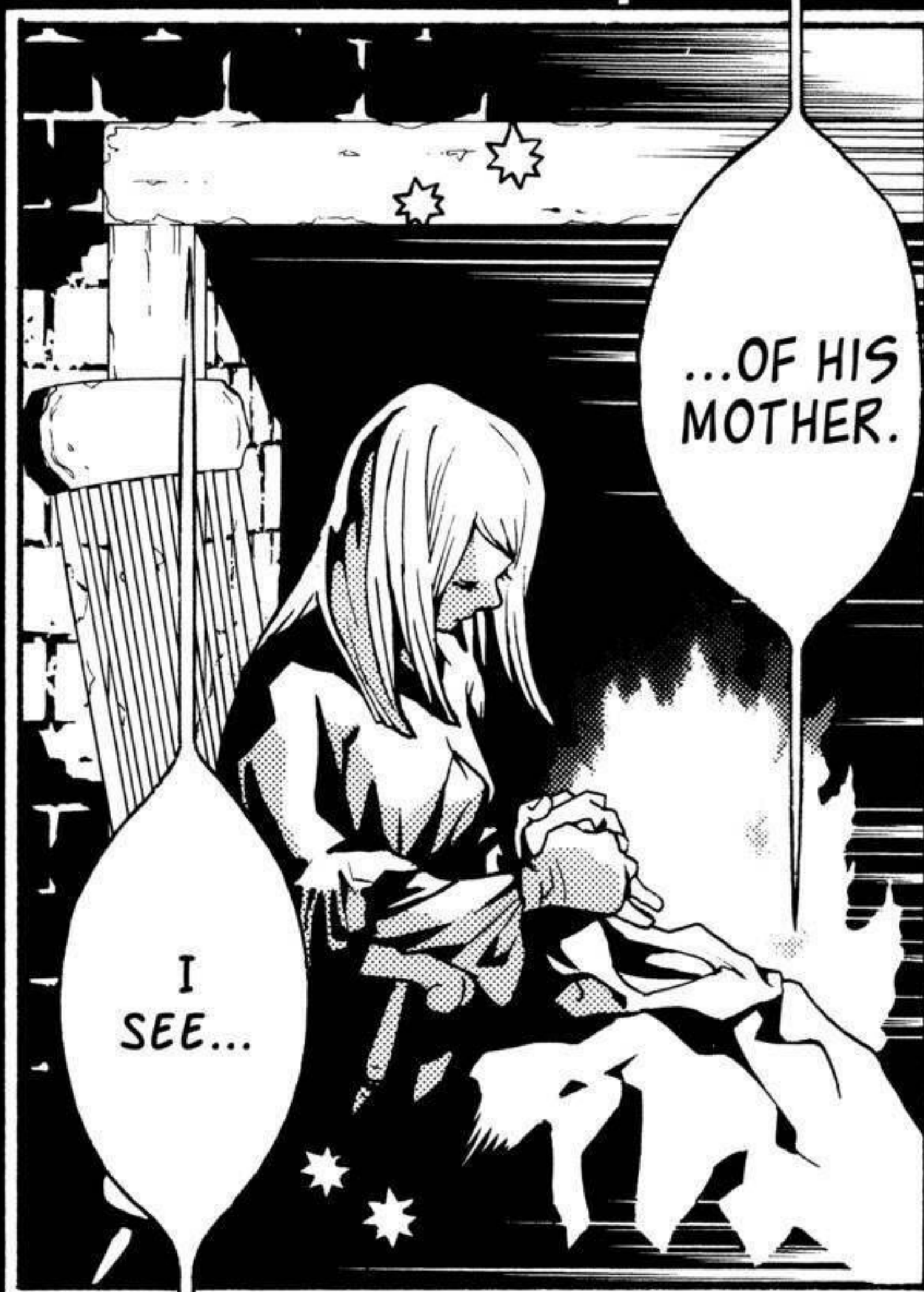
PLEASE STOP!

STOP!



THESE
ARE
FRAG-
MENTS...

...OF
LAG'S
HEART.



I
SEE...

...OF HIS
MOTHER.



MEM-
ORIES

MAMA
...



...
RAISED
LAG...
...RAISED
ME ALL BY
HERSELF.

HIS
MOTHER
...
MOM...

HIS
MOTHER
...
MAMA...
LAG AND
...
ME AND
...

WERE
ALWAYS
TOGETHER
...

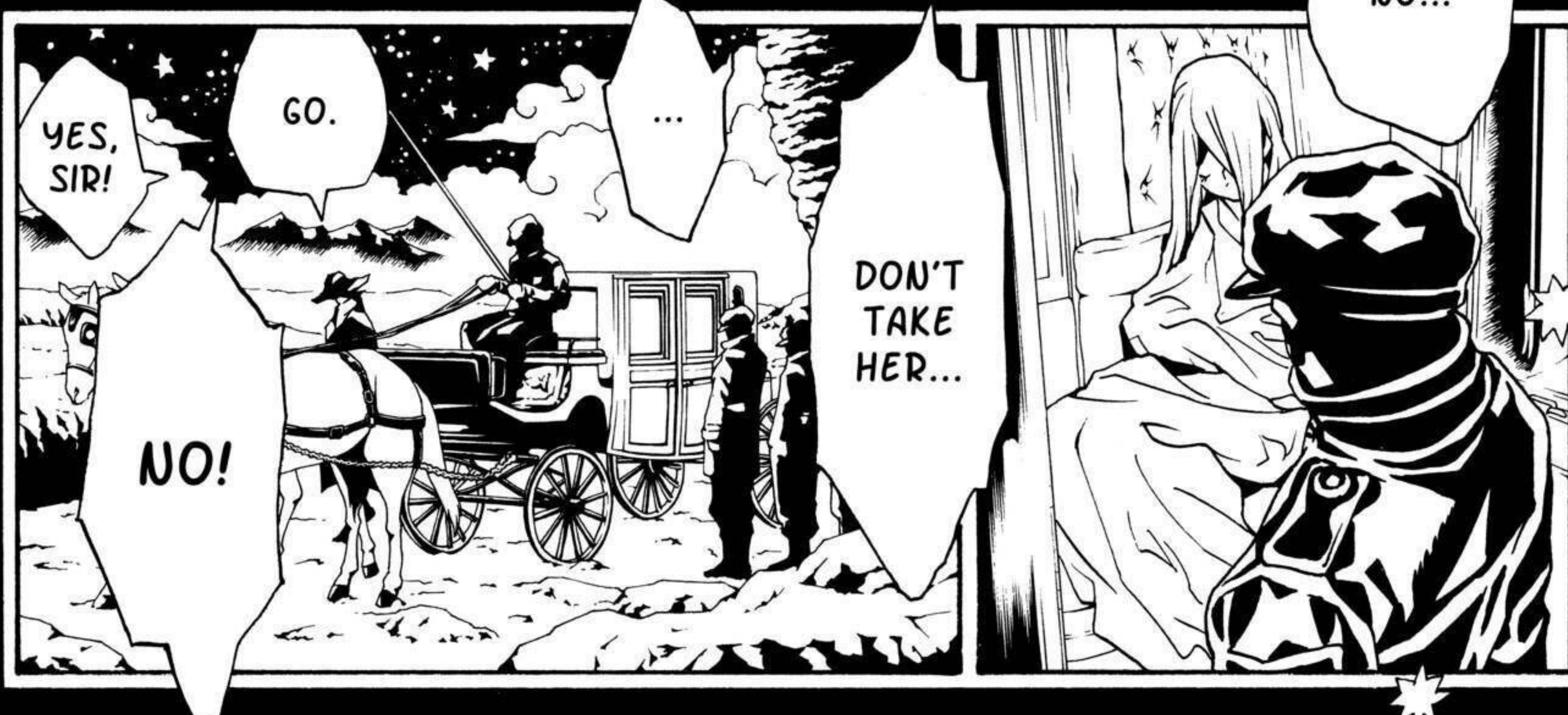
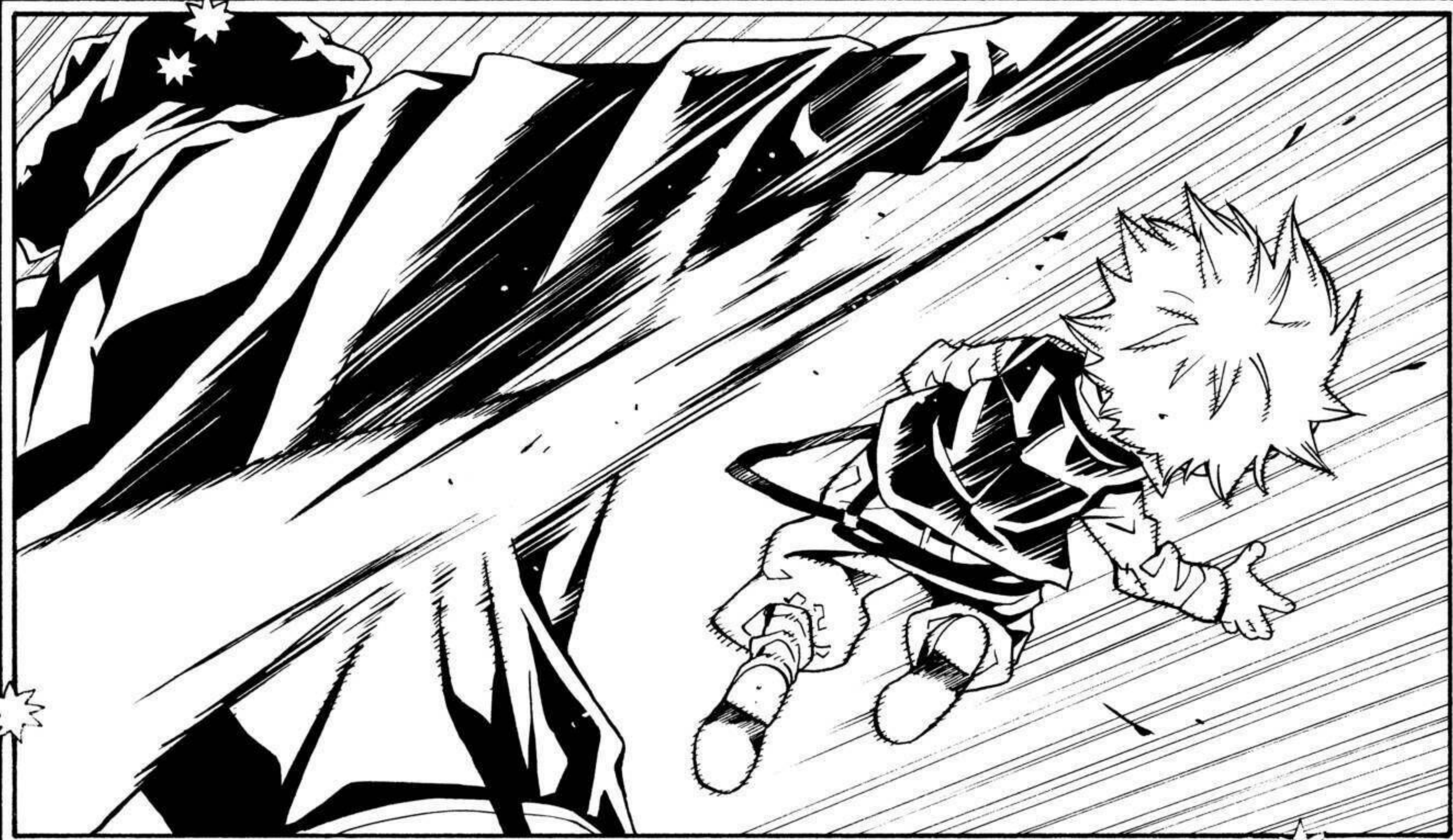
GIVE
ME...

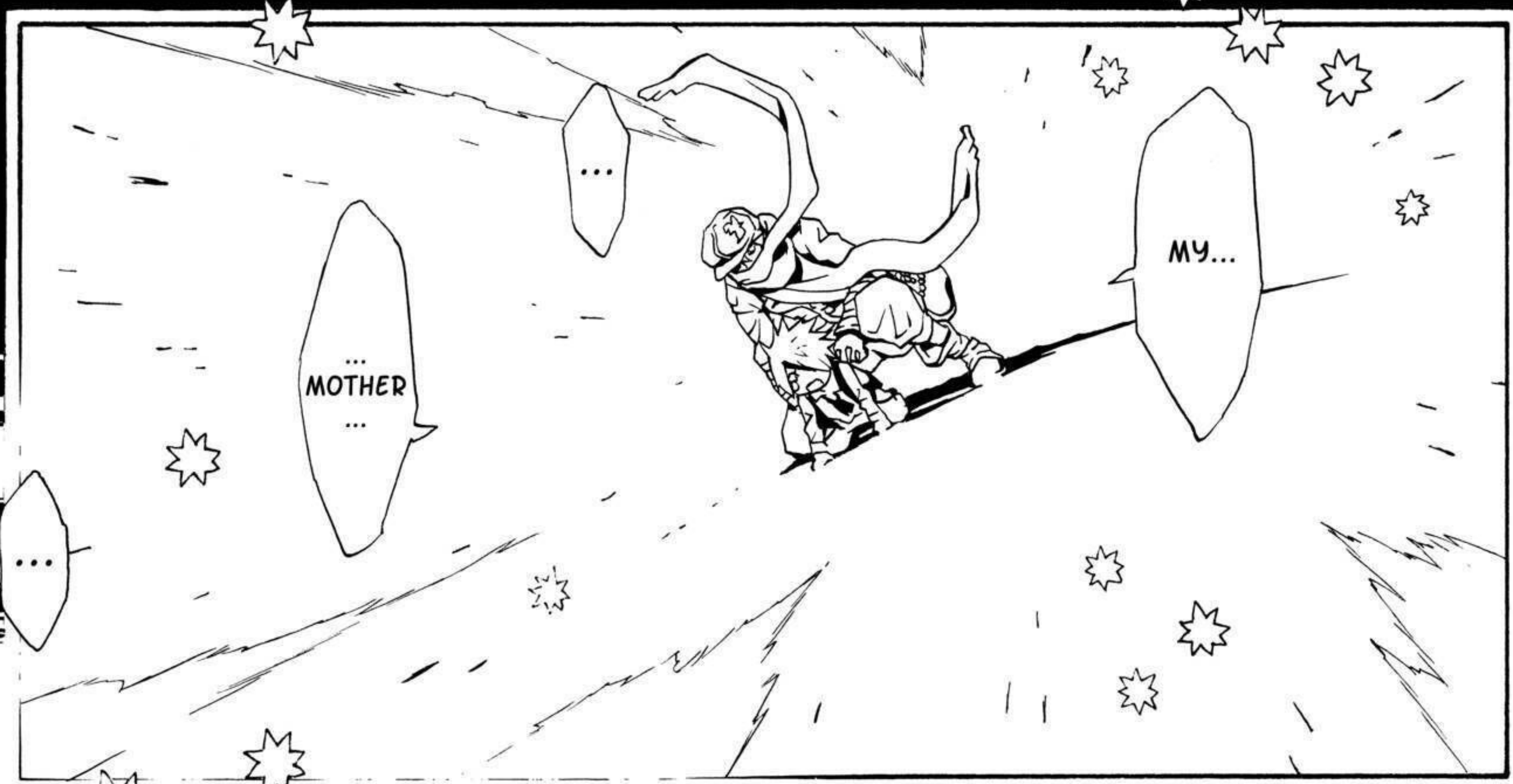
LAG'S
...
GIVE
ME...

...ALL BY
HERSELF.

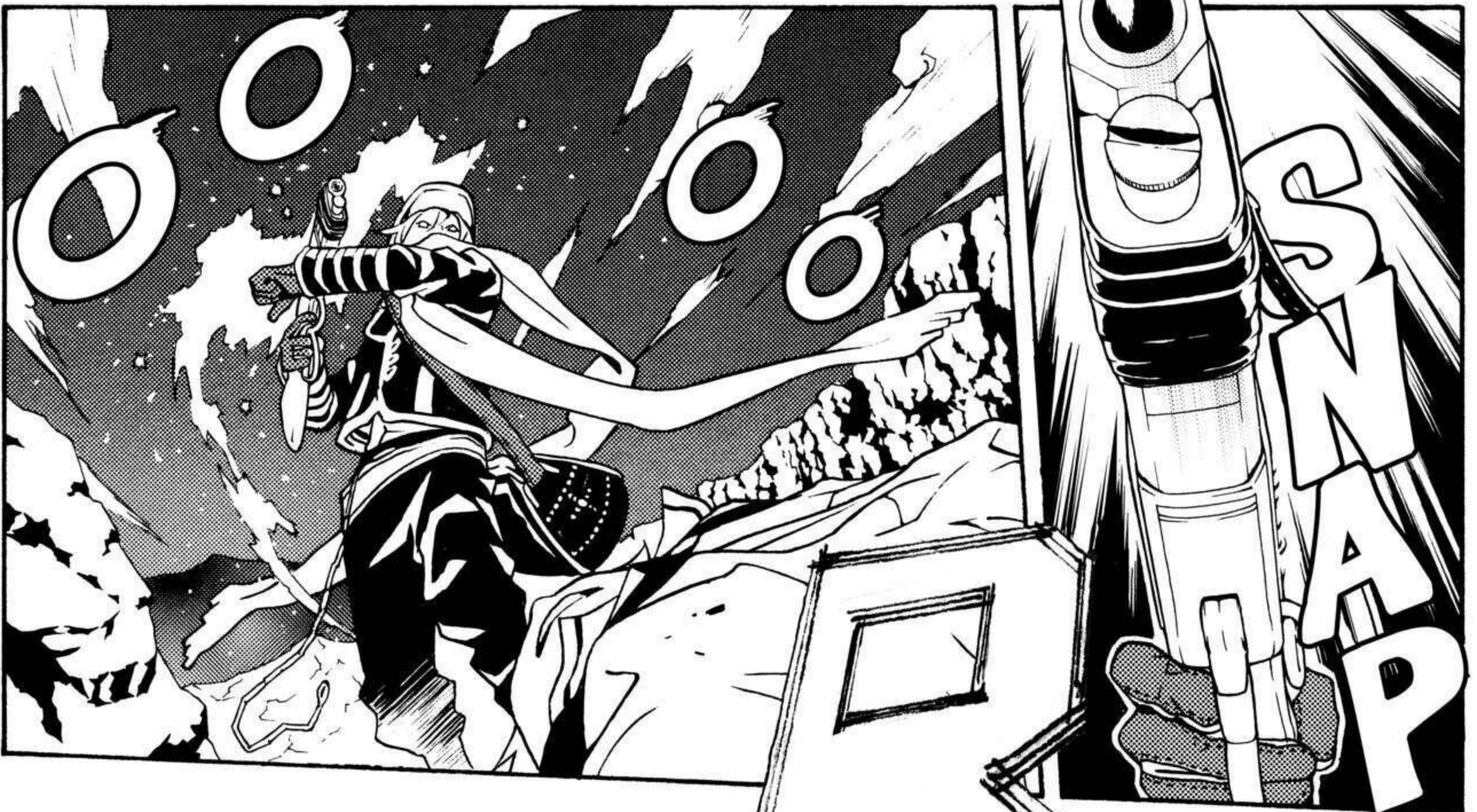
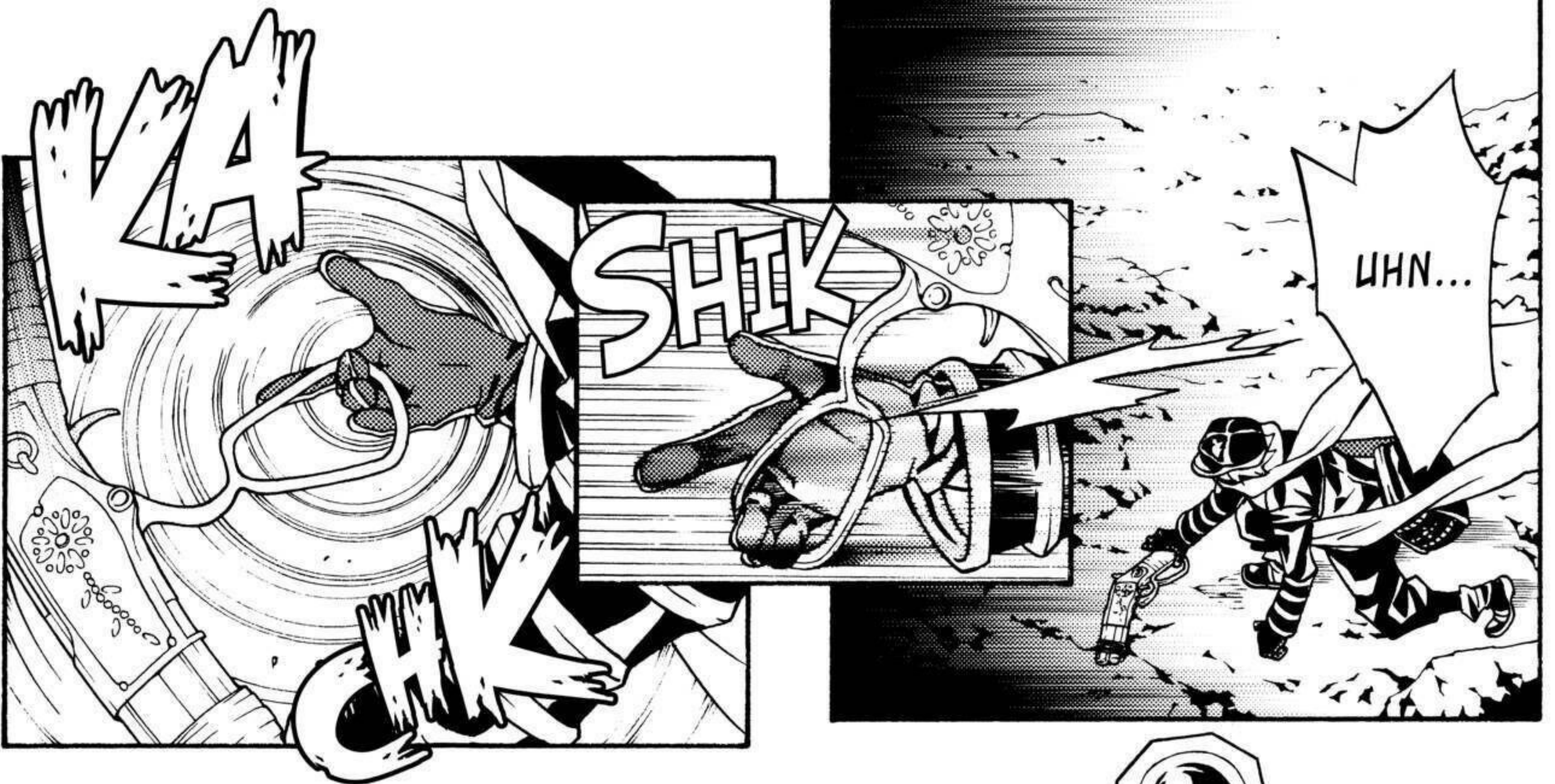
MAMA
!!!

GIVE
HER
BACK!

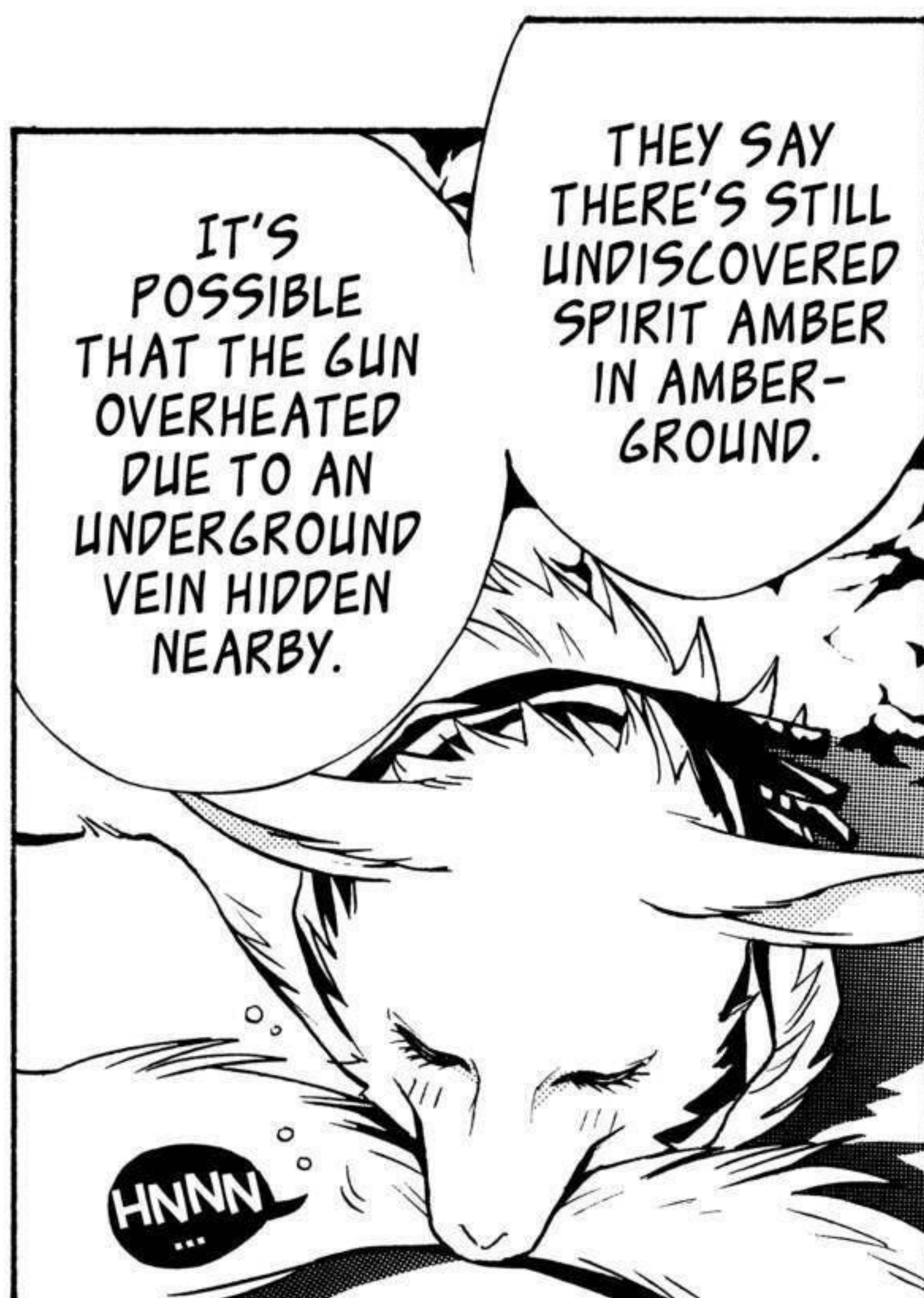












IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE GUN OVERHEATED DUE TO AN UNDERGROUND VEIN HIDDEN NEARBY.

THEY SAY THERE'S STILL UNDISCOVERED SPIRIT AMBER IN AMBER-GROUND.



HARD TO SAY EXACTLY.

WHAT HAPPENED?

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT AMBER IN MY SHINDANJUU JUMPED, AND IT FIRED ON ITS OWN.



...LAG SEEING.

ANYWAY, GET A LITTLE MORE SLEEP...



...SO I HOPE I DIDN'T DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

HUH?

WHAT?!

He's laughing?



TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT'S NOT MY STRONG POINT...

...IS A BOOSTER SHOT TO HELP YOUR HEART RECOVER.

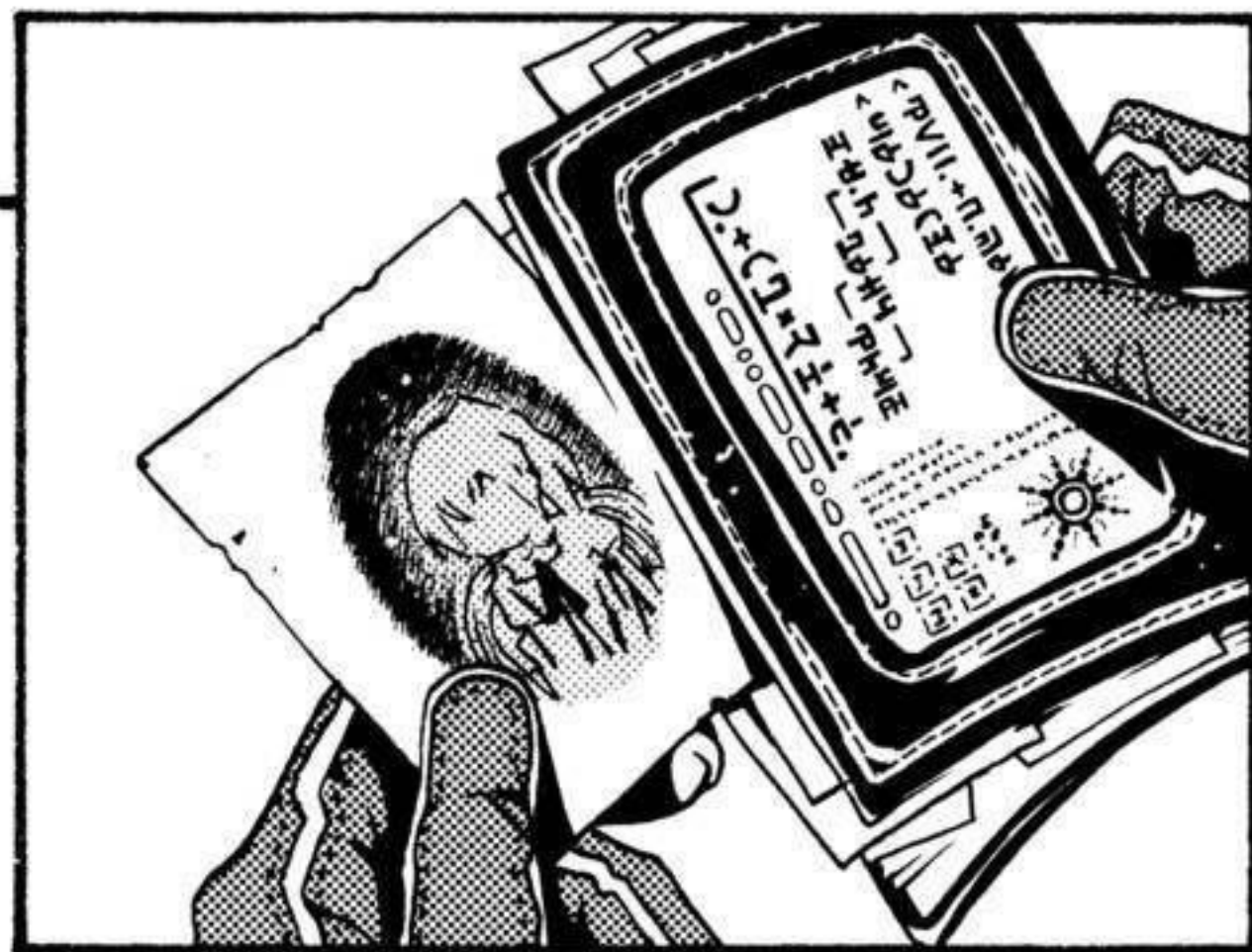
ONE USE ...

THE SHINDAN HAS MANY USES.

YOU
USED TOO
MUCH
HEART.

GOOD
NIGHT,
LAG
SEEING.

SIGH



THAT'S
WHAT
THAT
FEELING
WAS.

FWIP...

HIS
MOTHER,
HUH?



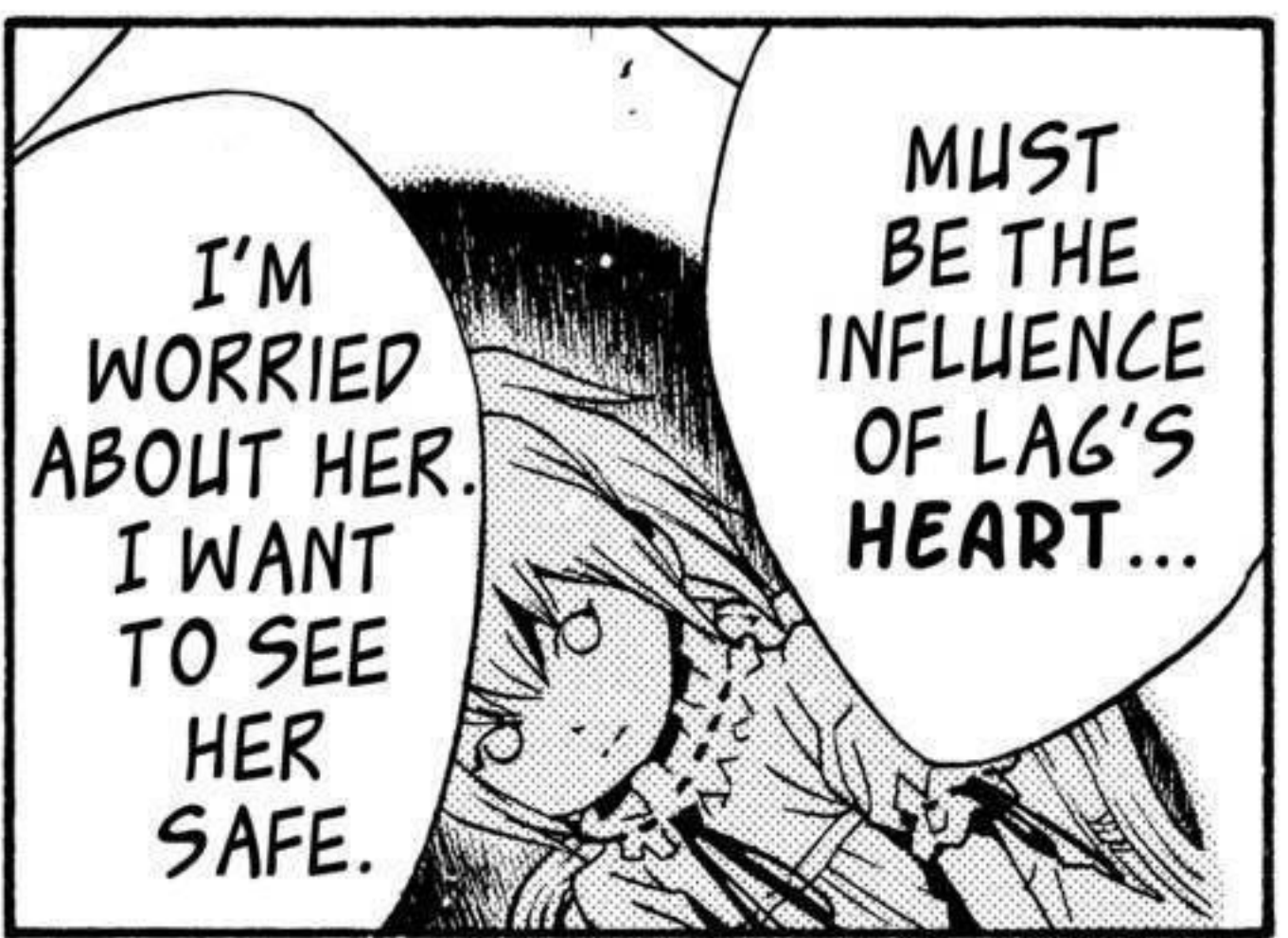
BUT I'M
ALRIGHT.

THANKS,
RODA...

RIGHT.
NOW
THEN...



Rrruuu



I'M
WORRIED
ABOUT HER.
I WANT
TO SEE
HER
SAFE.

MUST
BE THE
INFLUENCE
OF LAG'S
HEART...



SYL-
VETTE



...THERE
ARE BOUND
TO BE
HUNDREDS
OF GAICHUU
HOMING IN
ON US.

AFTER A
FIREWORKS
DISPLAY LIKE
THAT HEART
BURST...

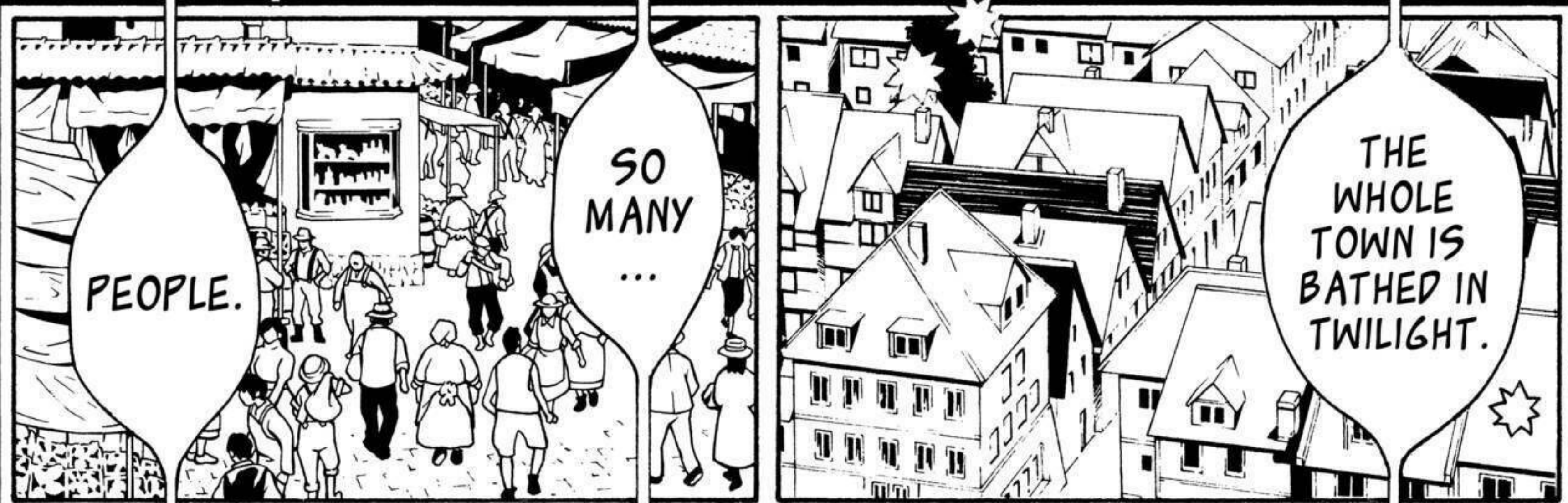
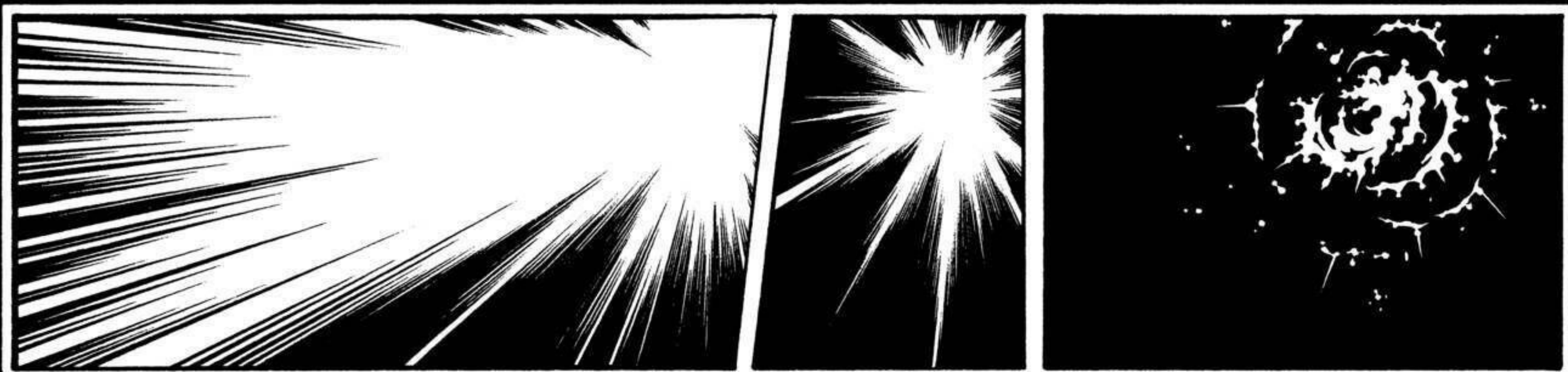
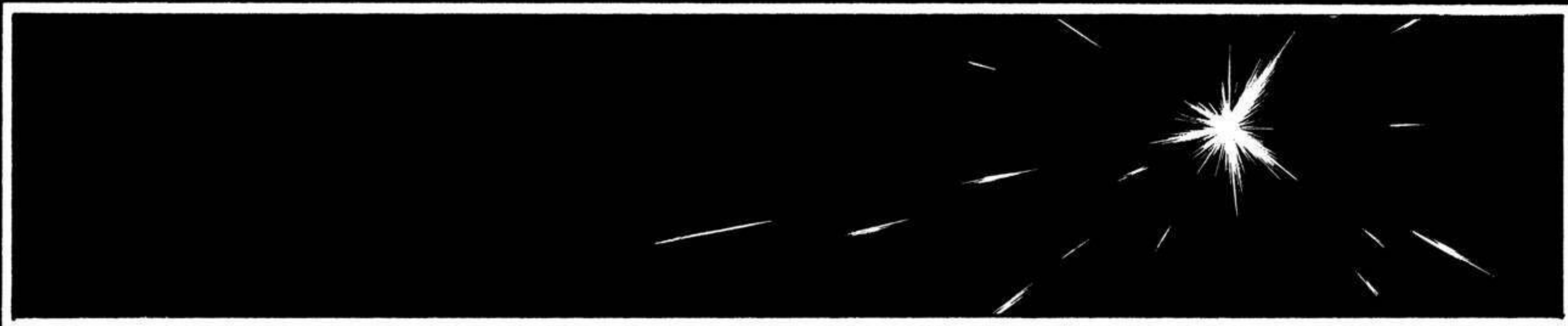


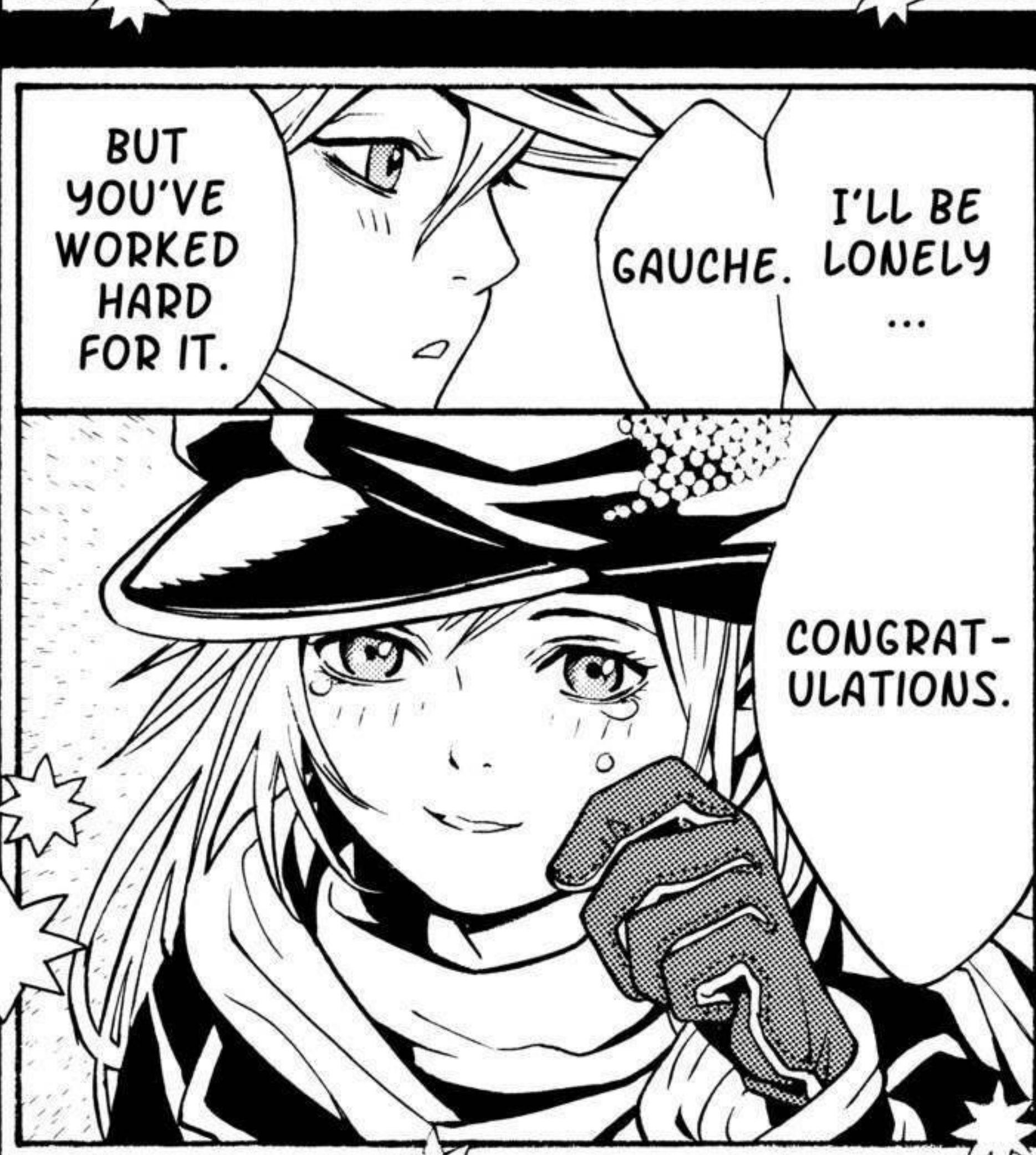
AFTER
ALL...

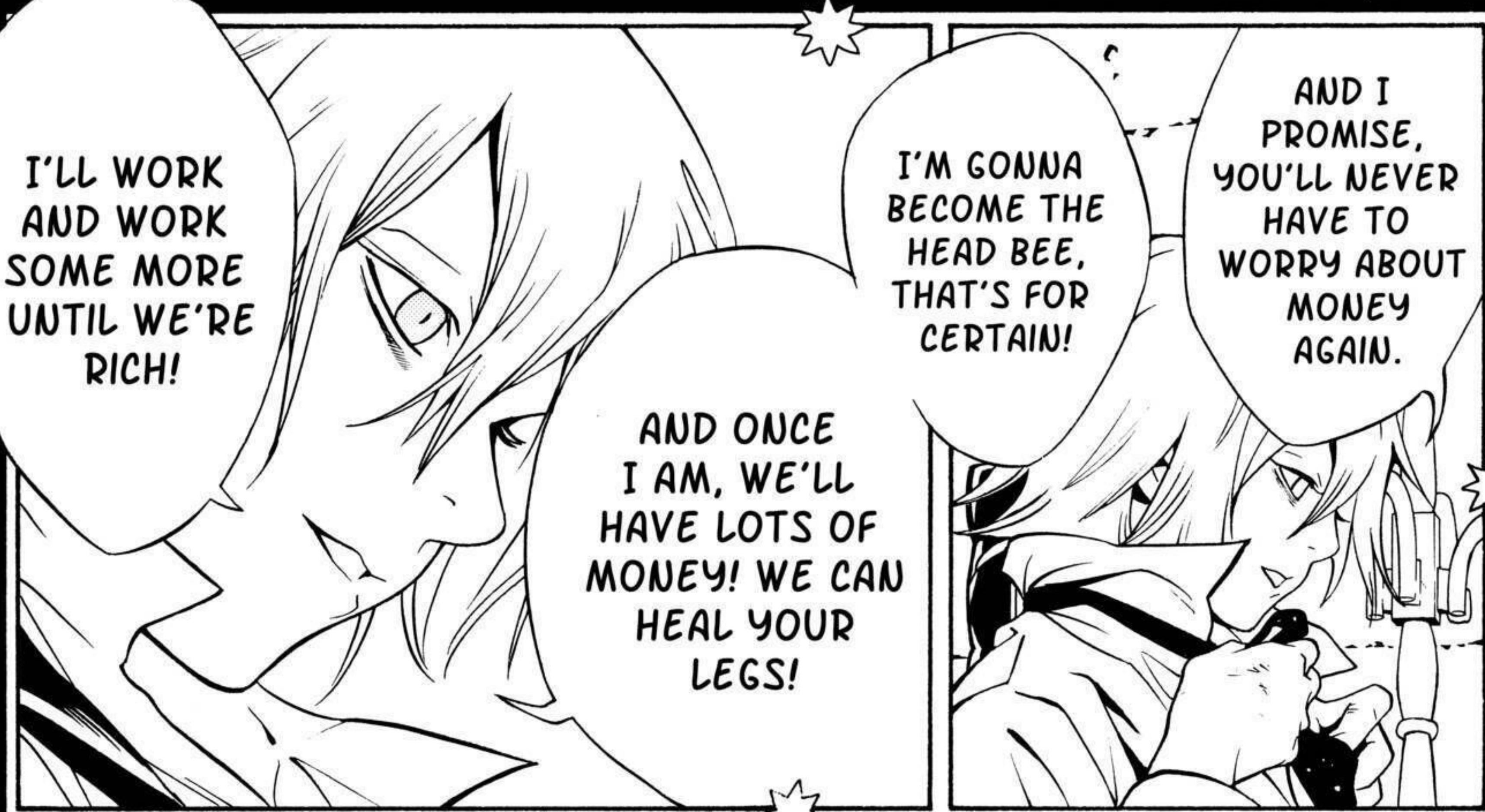
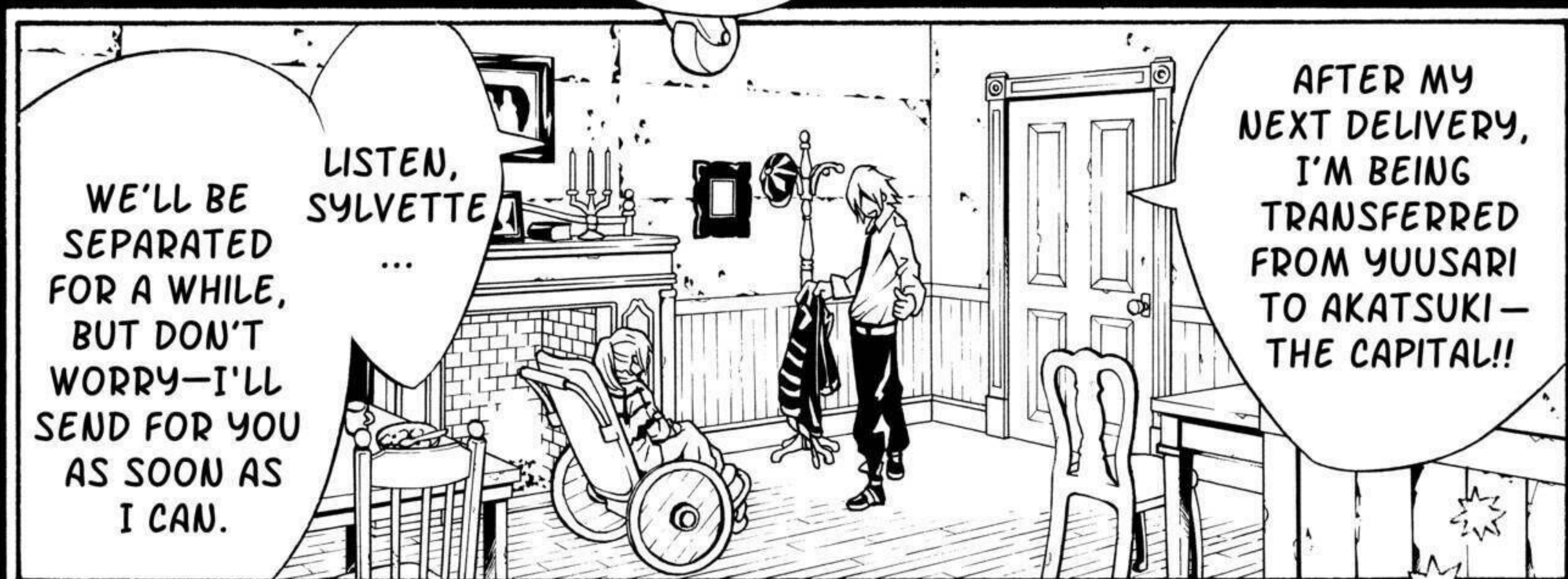
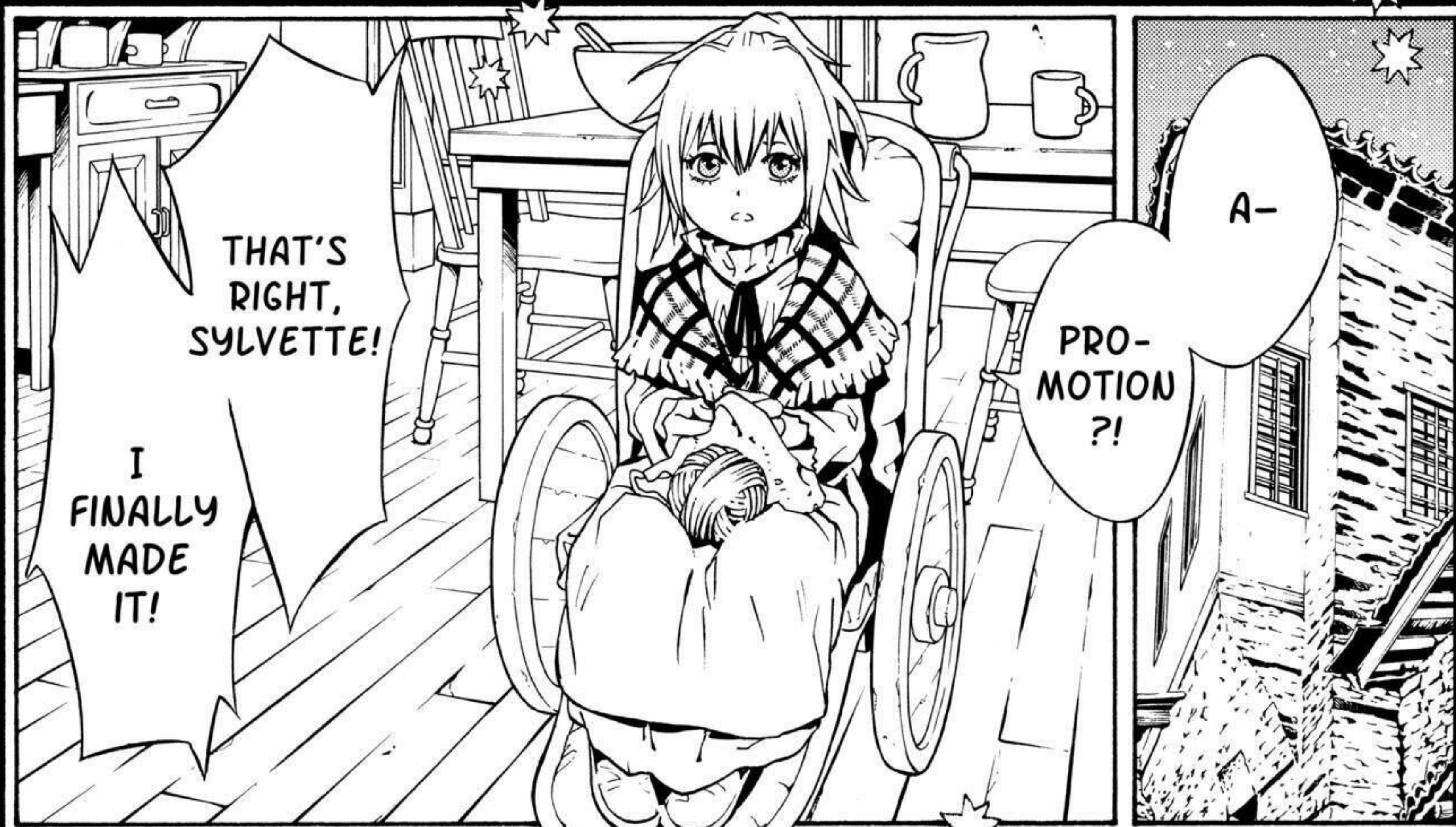
I'LL
BE
WORKING
OVERTIME
...

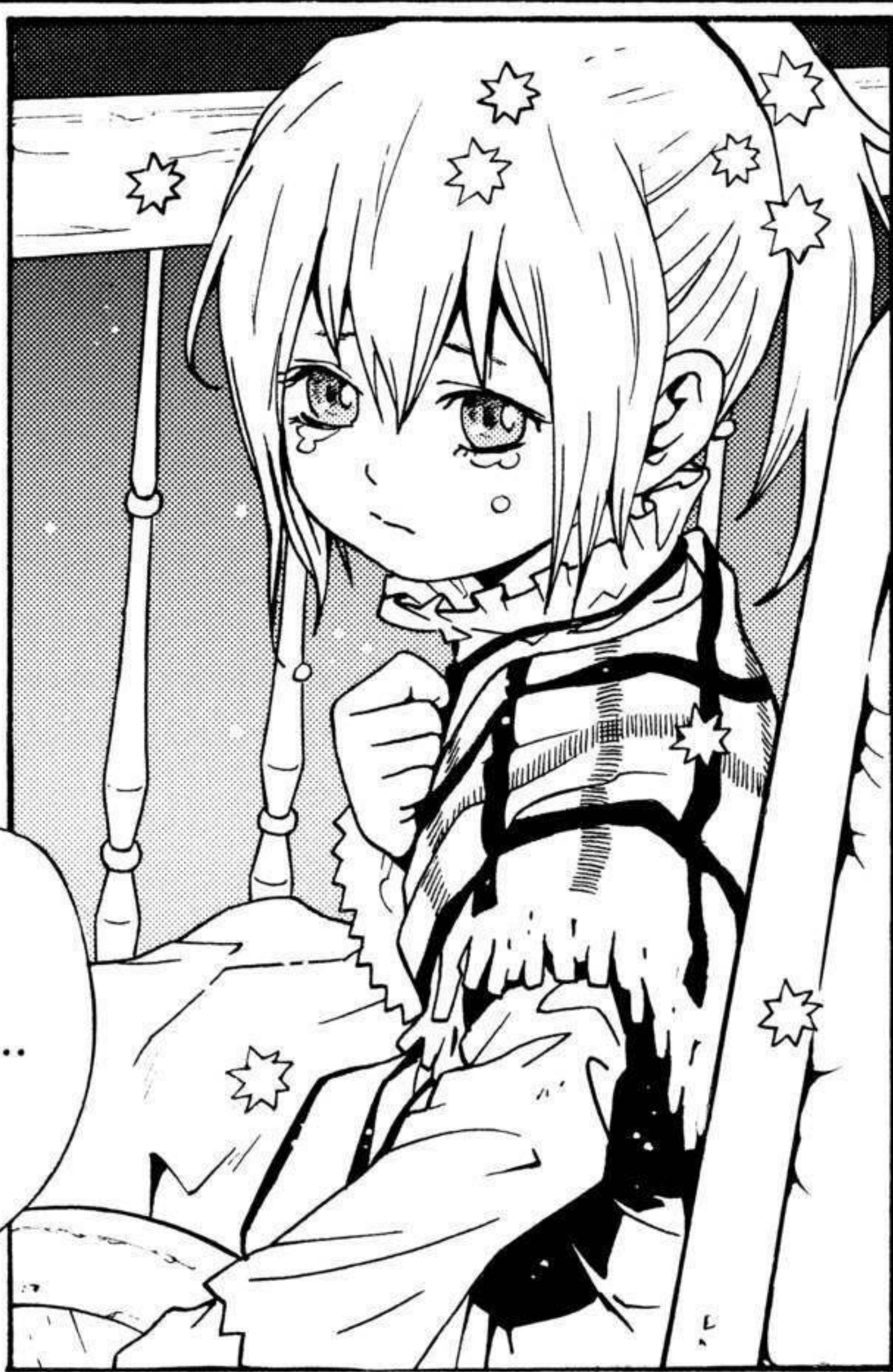
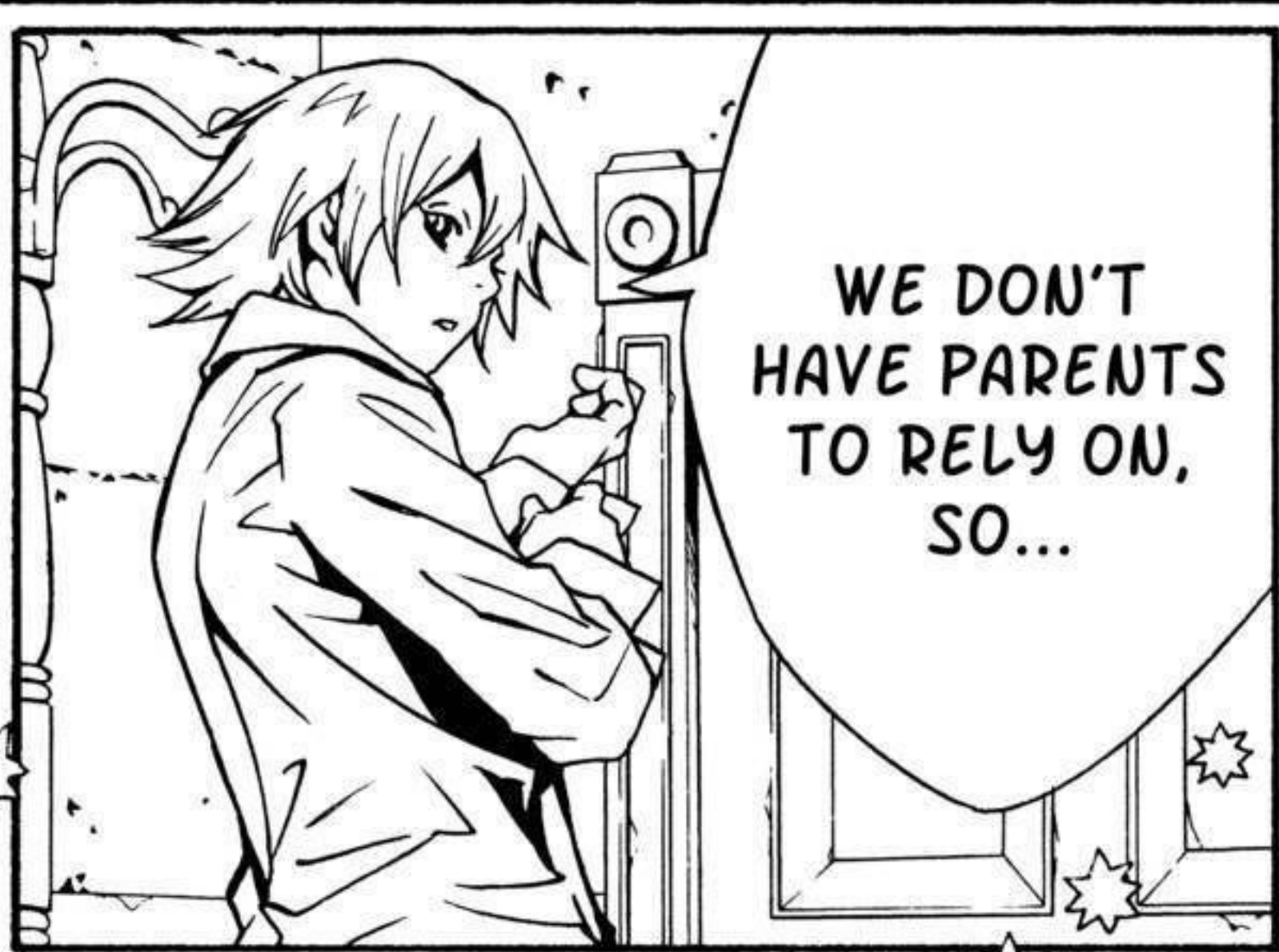
...IT'S
PART
OF THE
JOB.

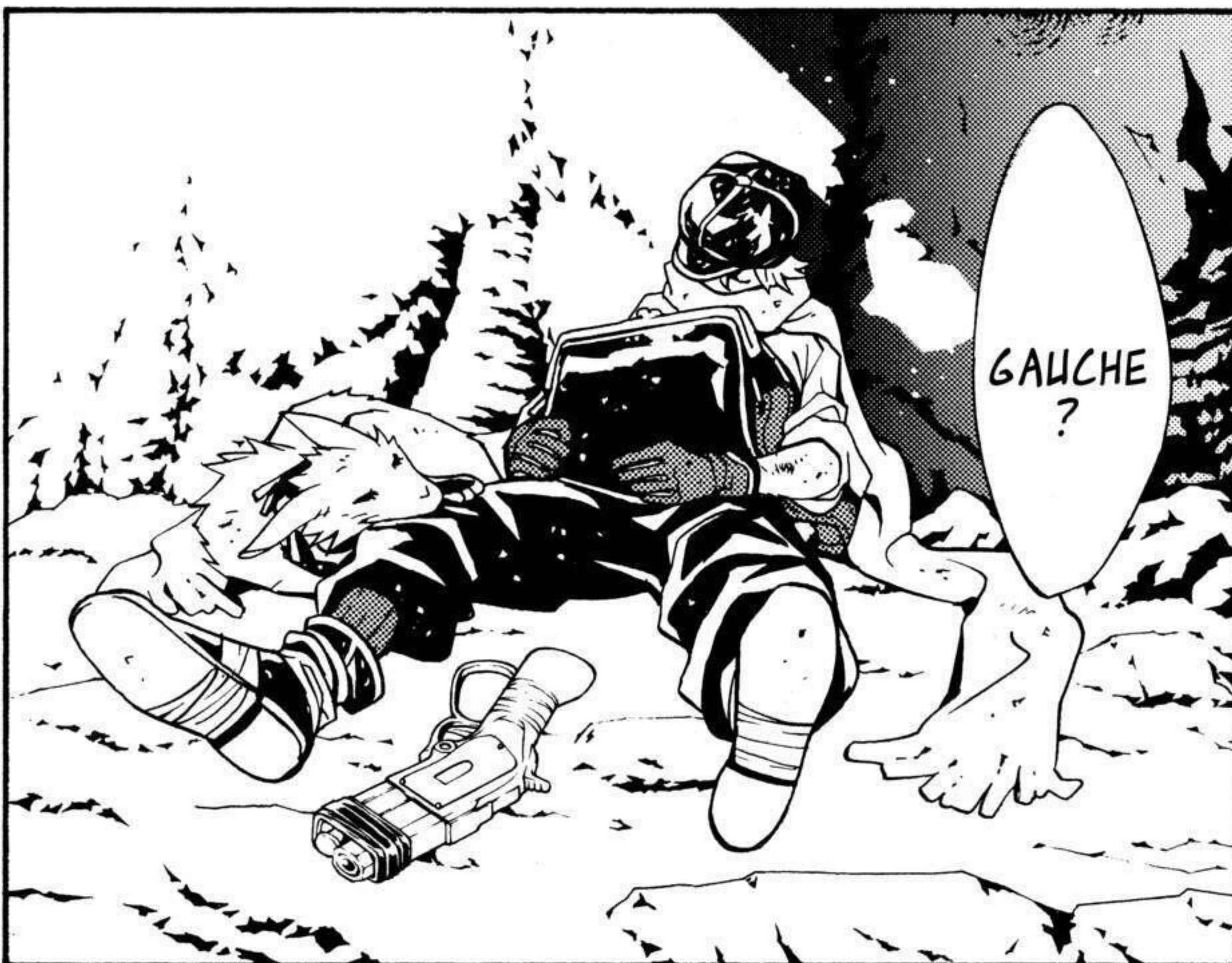
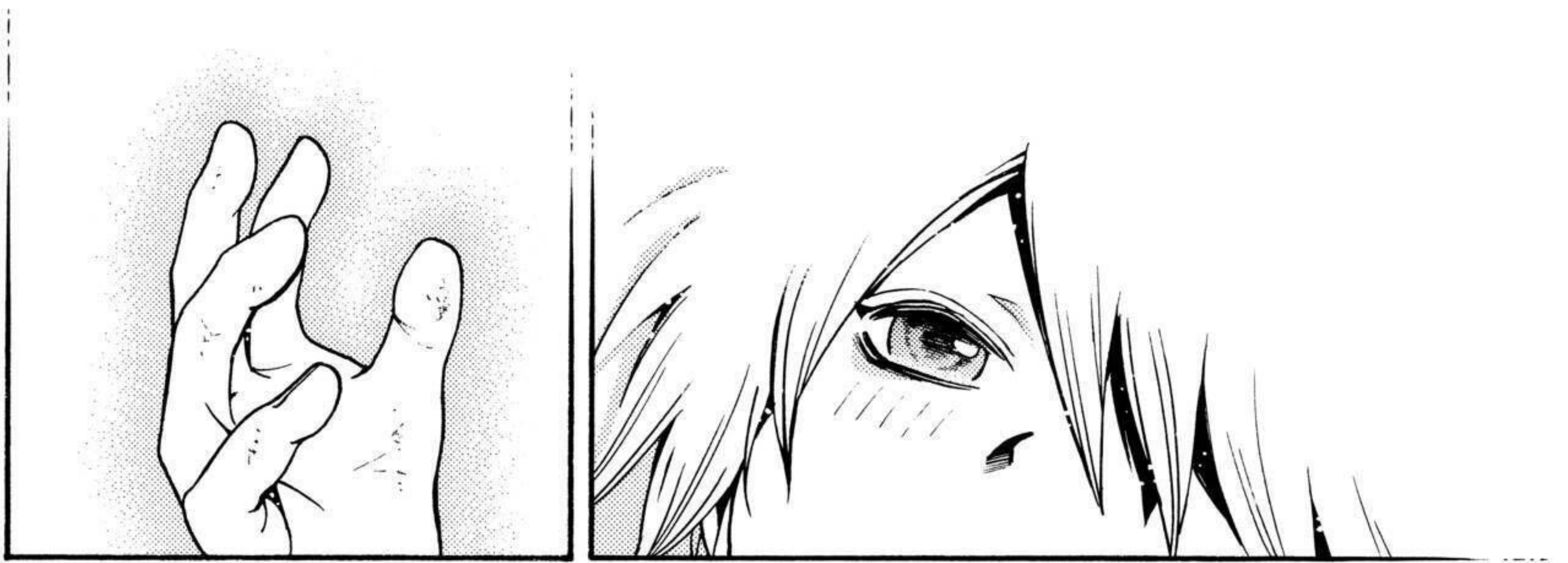
...BUT
THAT
CAN'T
BE
HELPED.

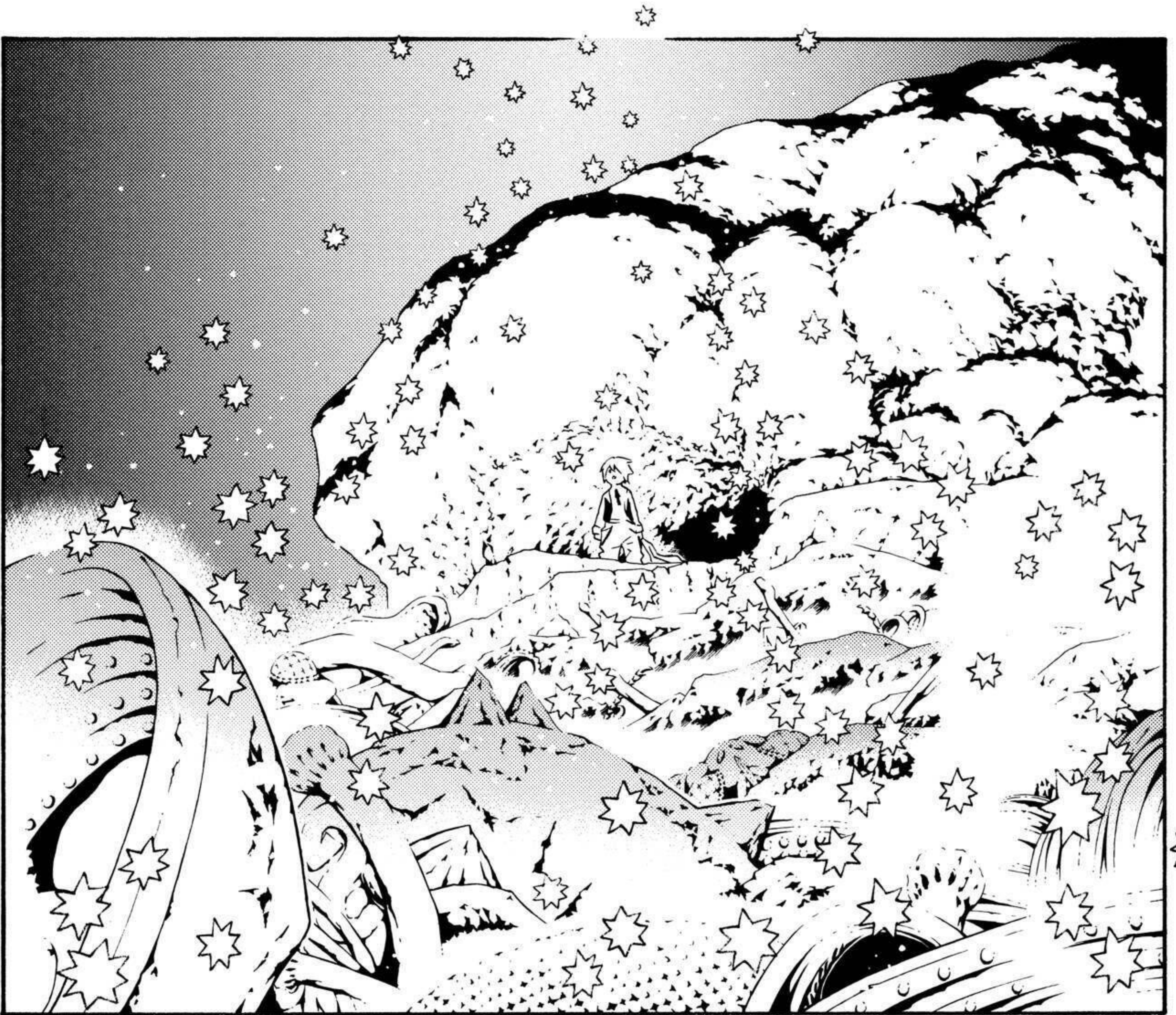
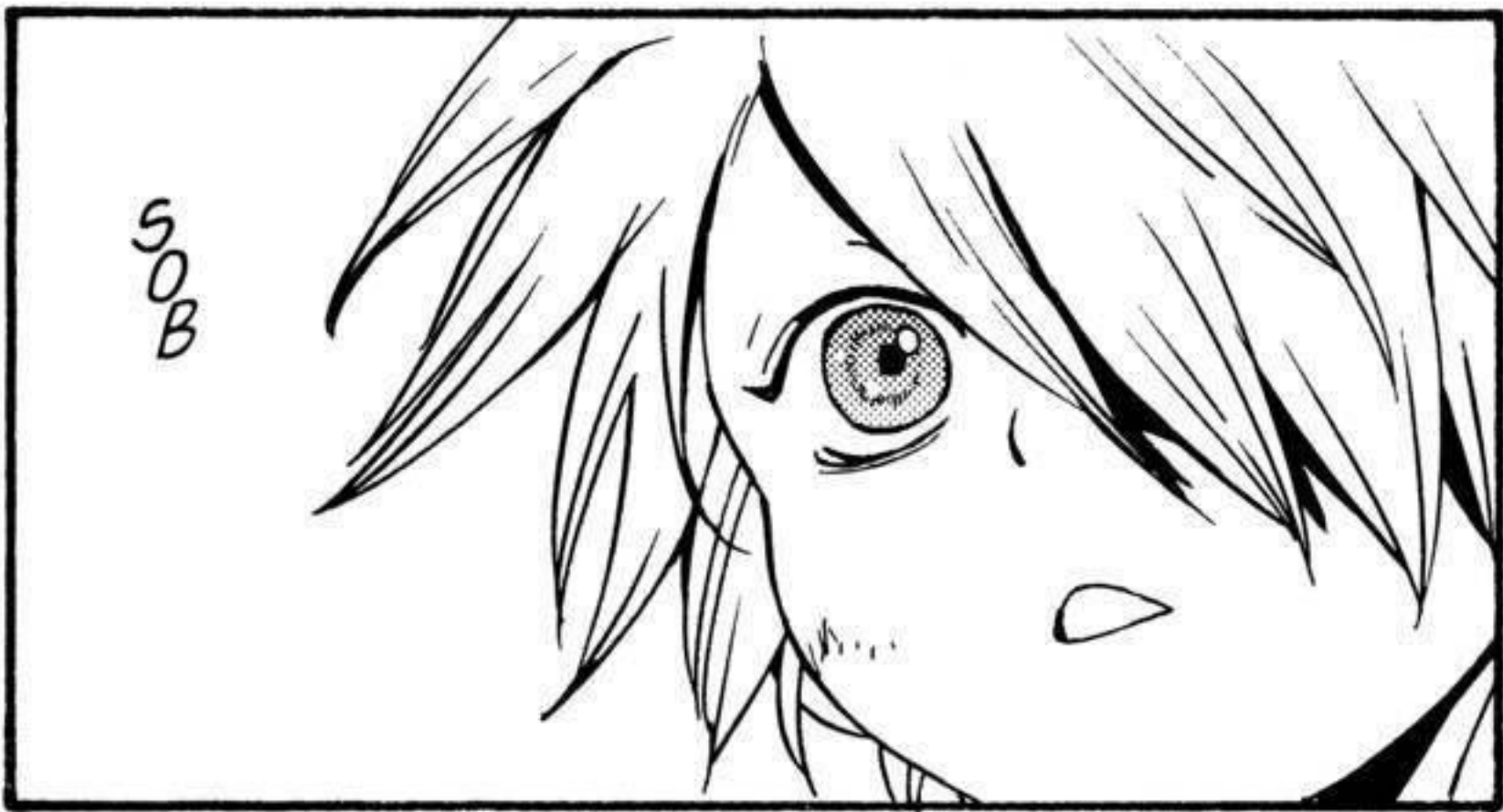














WHAT'S
A...
HEAD
BEE?



OH,
RIGHT...
THAT
SHINDAN
SHOT MUST
HAVE GIVEN
YOU SOME
STRANGE
DREAMS,
HUH?

A
HEAD
BEE!
WHAT'S
A HEAD
BEE?



HUH?



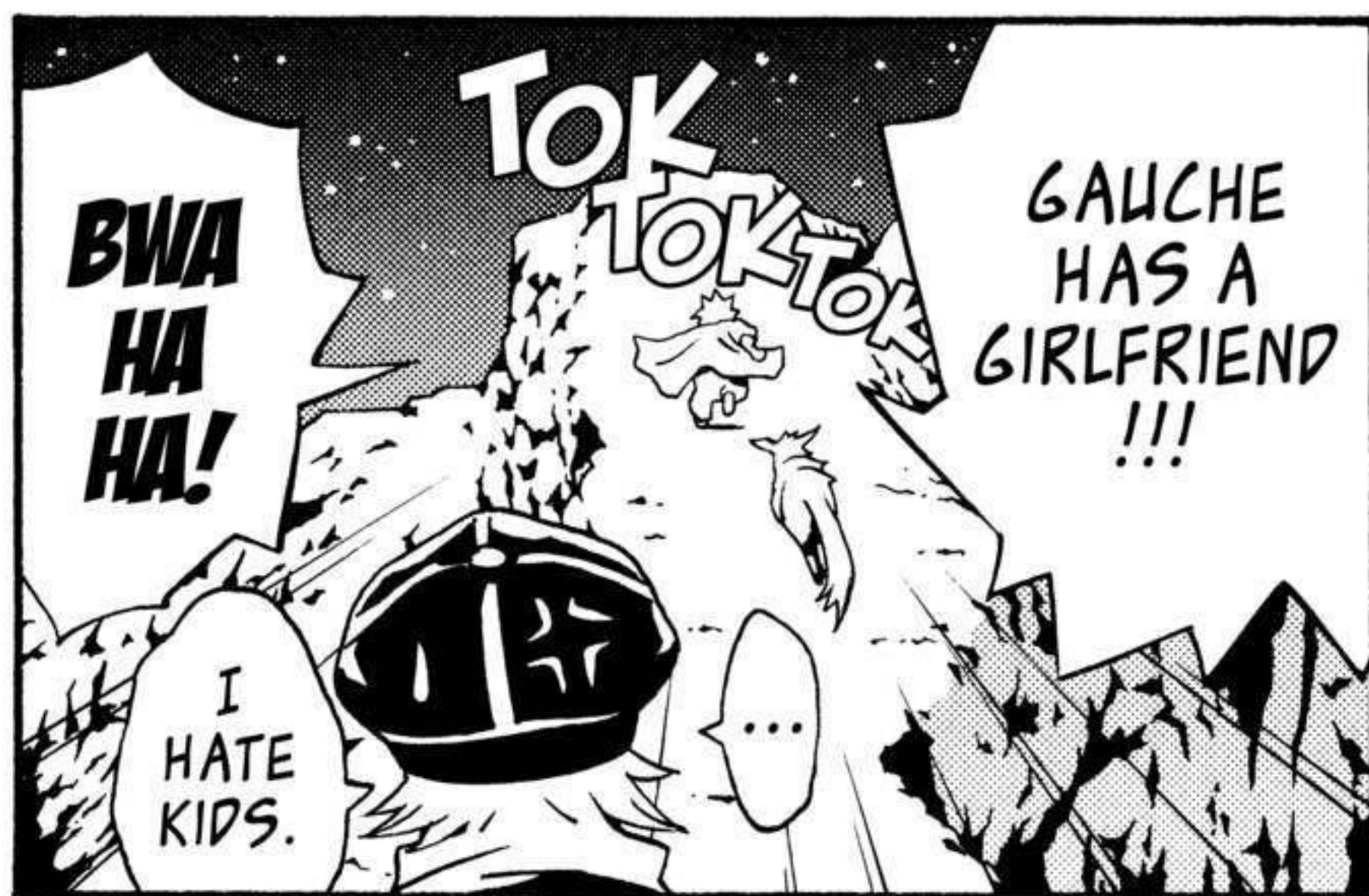
THEY SAY
THERE'S
NOTHING
THE HEAD
BEE CAN'T
DELIVER.



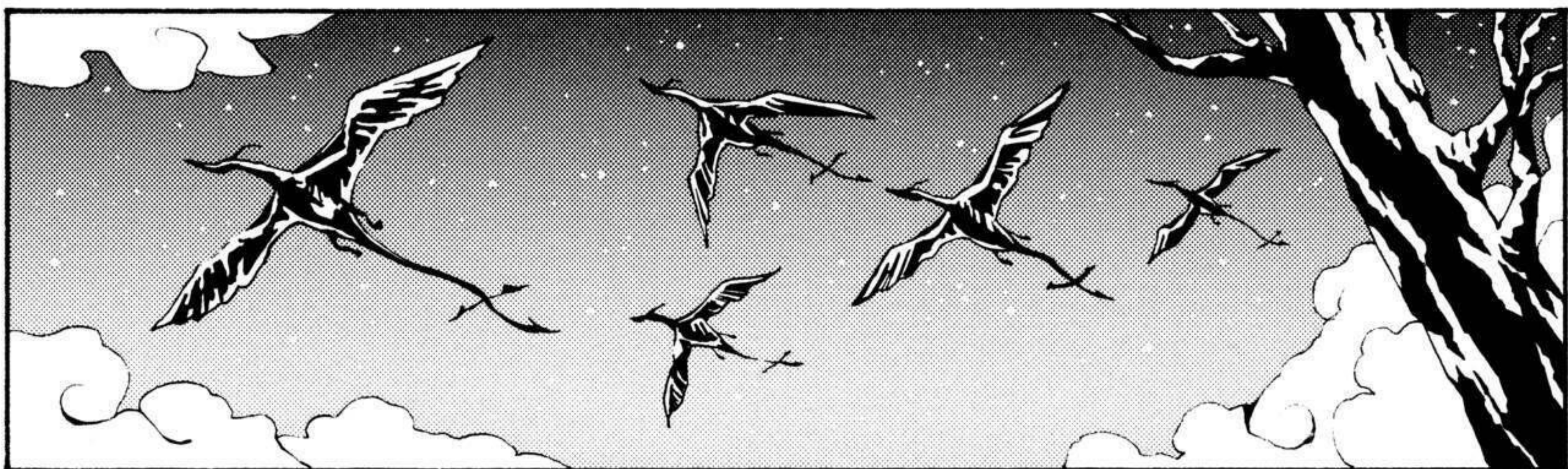
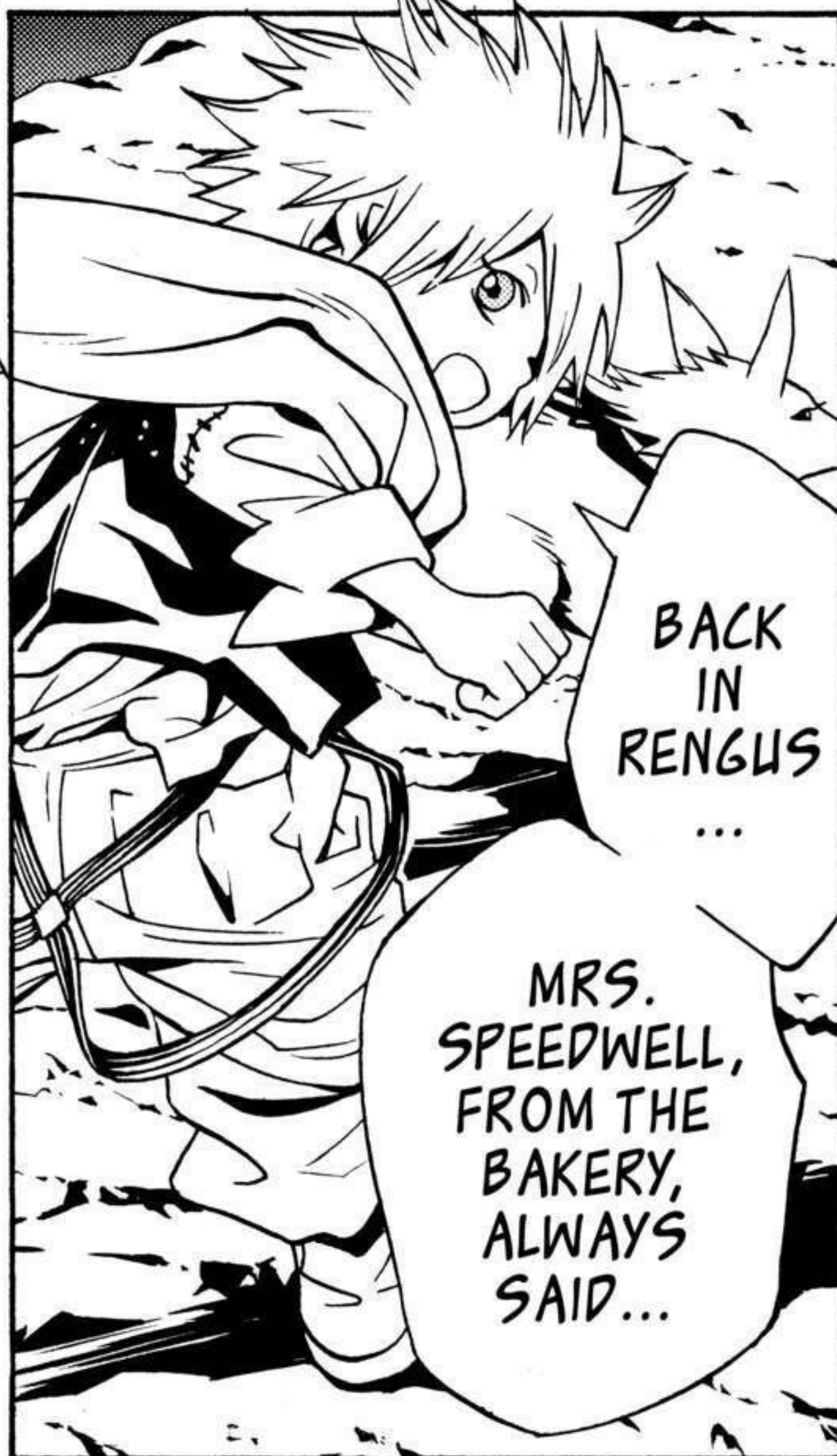
YOU MEAN,
LIKE THE
GENERAL
OF THE
LETTER
BEEES?

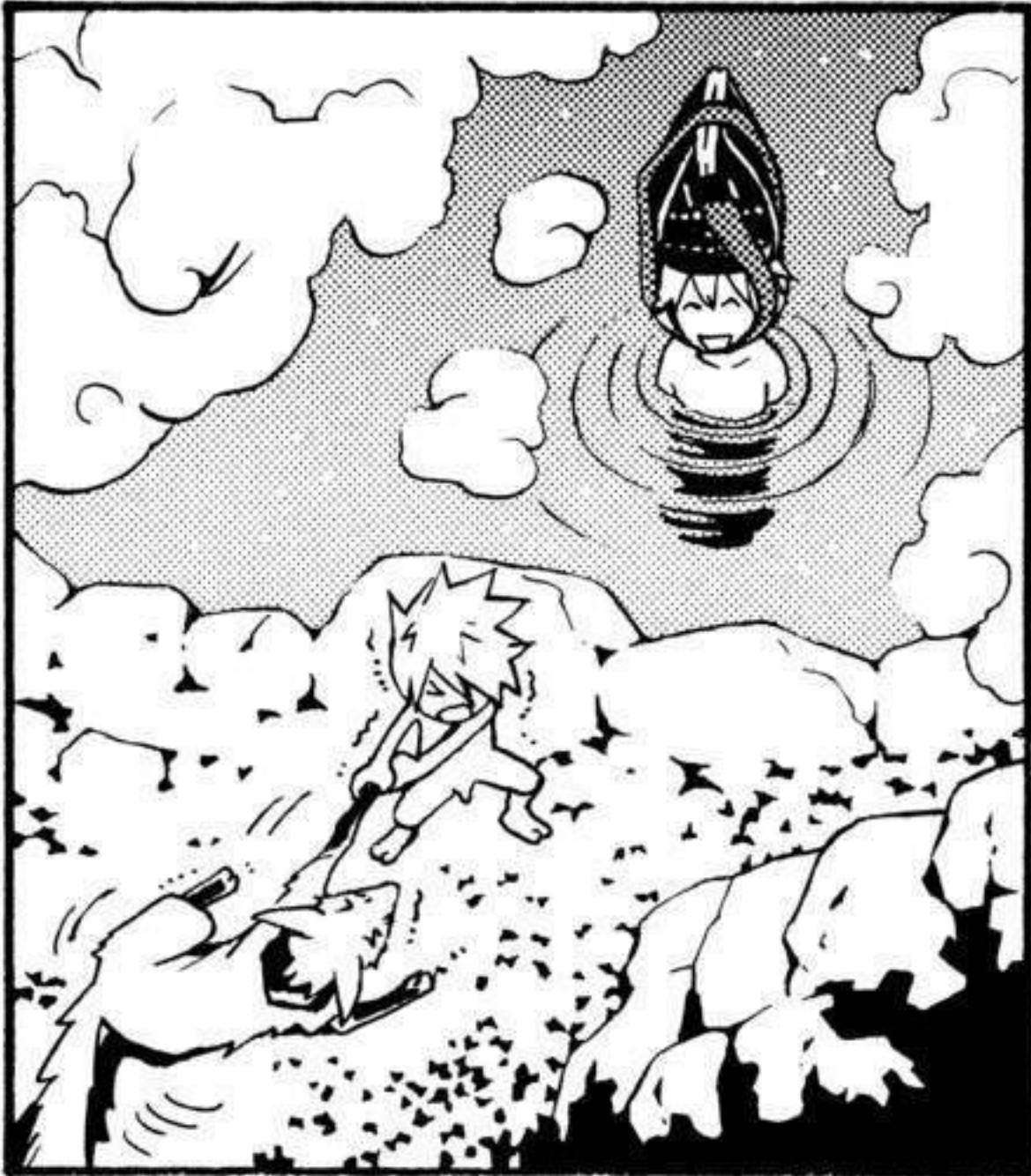
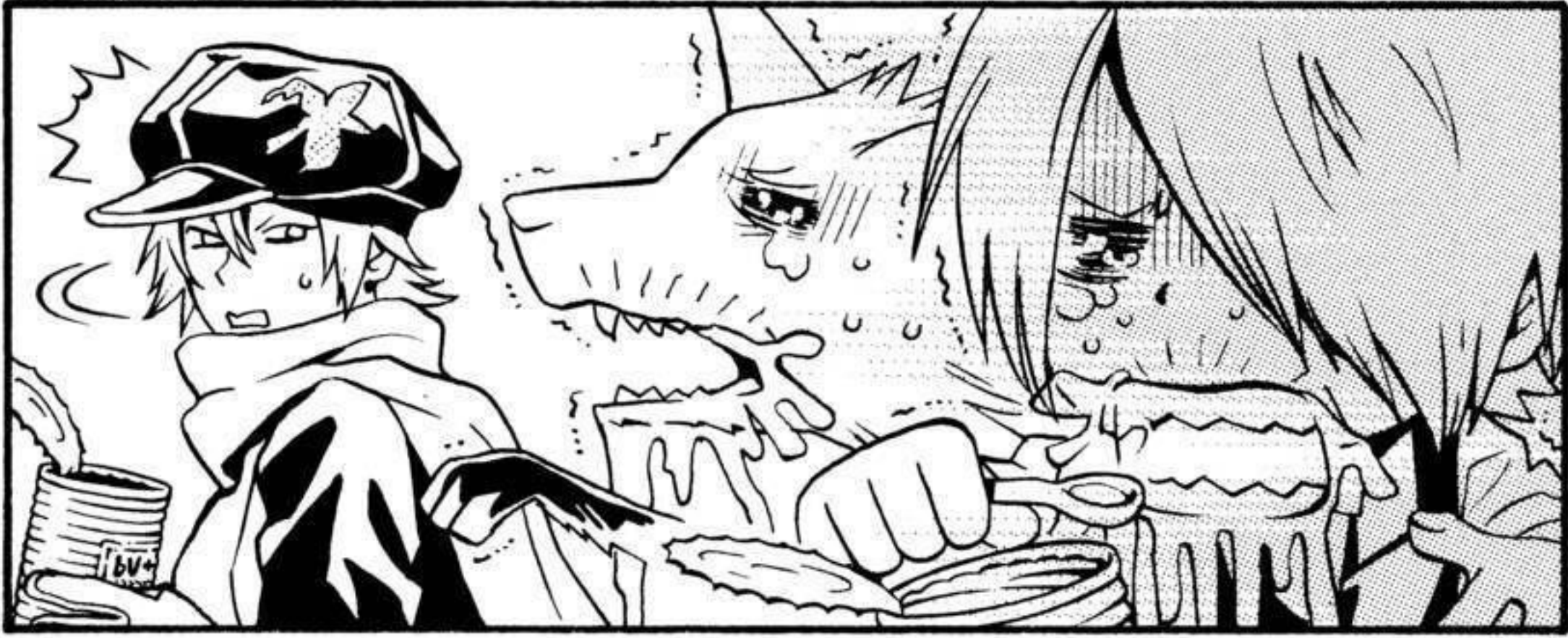
I...
GUESS
YOU
COULD
SAY THAT.

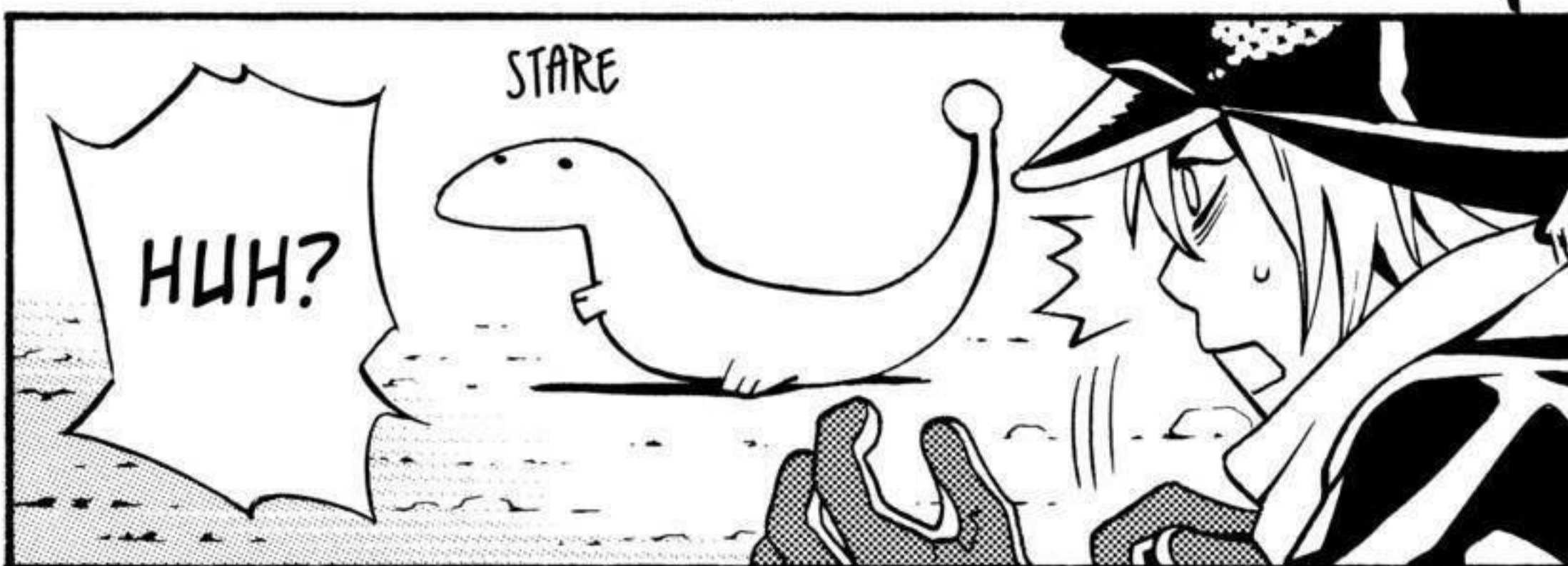
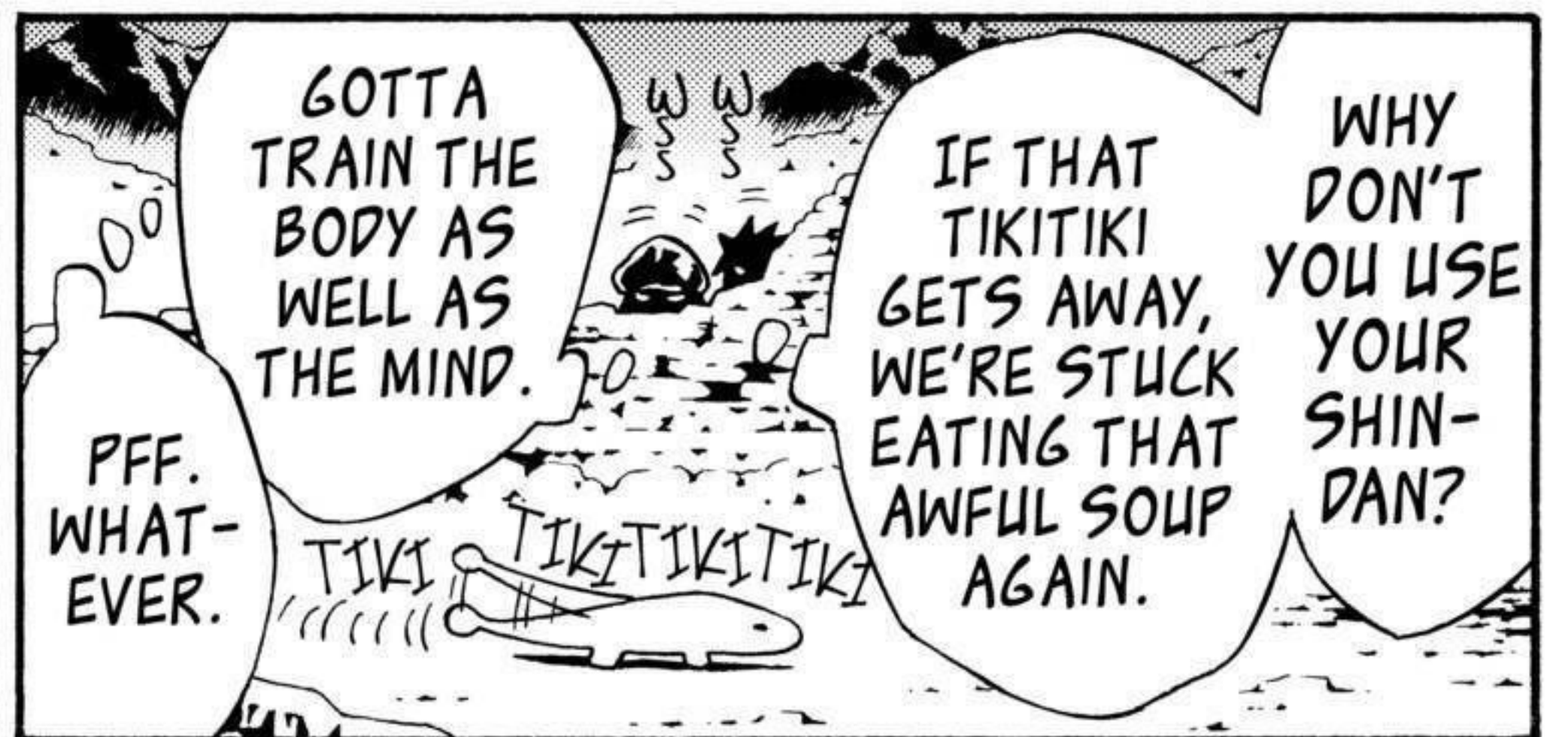
HEAD BEE
IS THE
HIGHEST
RANK A
LETTER BEE
CAN ATTAIN.



... "THE MORE
OBNOXIOUS
THEY ARE,
THE MORE
LIKELY THEY
ARE TO
SUCCEED"!









HOW
DO I SEND
A LETTER
TO HER?



WHAT
ABOUT
MAMA?

LAG...



WHAT'S
THE BIG
DEAL ABOUT
LETTERS?

ANYWAY
...



I
WANT TO
GO WITH
YOU TO
AKATSUKI!

TAKE
ME WITH
YOU!

PLEASE,
GAUCHE
!



I'LL
NEVER
SEE
MAMA
AGAIN!

I'LL
NEVER
SEE
HER...

IF YOU
DELIVER ME
TO CAMBEL
LITUS...



YOU'RE
GOING TO
AKATSUKI
AFTER THIS,
AREN'T YOU,
GAUCHE?

!

FIN